■ 2bU! / E2

Catching up with 17-year-old music hottie Jesse McCartney

■ Sports / A25

POC president threatens to withdraw recognition of BAP as nat'l basketball association

■ News / A2

Supreme Court denies with finality reopening of Aquino-Galman case

■ People at Work / B6

Campus minister helps develop spirituality of future professionals

■ Motoring / C1

Engineers, mechanics warn: Fakes can cost you your life

Visionary National Artist Ang Kiukok dies; 74

By Lito B. Zulueta

NATIONAL Artist Ang Kiukok, whose violent yet visionary paintings of wild dogs, fighting cocks, gnarled lovers and the crucified Christ permanently transformed the Philippine art market so used to sunny landscapes and pretty still lifes, died Monday night after a pro-

VISIONARY/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Antijueteng bishop bugged by 'echoes, voices' in phone

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHO'S bugging the bishop?

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, who has rattled many nerves with his denunciations of rampant "jueteng" operations, is complaining of "echoes and voices" in his cellular phone, and says he is proba-

ANTI-JUETENG/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Wednesday, May 11, 2005 ★★ 66 pages 7 sections Vol. 20 No. 152 P18

website: www.inq7.net

THE A-TEAM. Time for a team building workshop for President Arroyo and members of the Cabinet on Tuesday at the Palace. In photo, from left, are Vice President Noli de Castro, outgoing Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Top coco levy exec quits

It's good high living exposed–Boncodin

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Christine Gaylican

THE TOP executive of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) who enjoyed "shocking" perks and privileges despite the administration's austerity policy has resigned his post.

But the independent inquiry being conducted by United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) into Rolando Golez's high living will continue despite his resignation, according to UCPB chair Jose Perez.

Perez said Golez phoned him yesterday morning to say that he had submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo his resignation as president and chief executive officer of the CIIF Oil Mills Group, the state-run trustee of the P140-billion coconut levy fund, and as a director of UCPB.

In a one-page letter dated May 8, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, Golez said he was "very pleased and honored" to have served the coconut farmers during his stint at the CIIF.

He said he had "endeavored to contribute" to Ms Arroyo's 10-point agenda "by remaining faithful to the mandate of the [CIIF] to uplift the lives of the coconut farmers through the establishment of strong and effective economic policies and programs.

"However, in view of the recent public accusations cast against

TOP COCO/ A8

VAL HANDUMON

BLOOD-SMEARED hallway (above) on the second floor of the Sta. Rosa City Hall where Mayor Leon Arcillas was gunned down together with his two bodyguards. (Left) Grieving widow Ofelia dissolves into tears after her husband was declared dead at the University of Perpetual Help Hospital in Biñan, Laguna.

Bizarre twist in Ramos slay: Sister tagged

By Armand N. Nocum

THE KILLING of Filipino diplomat Alicia Ramos took a bizarre twist yesterday.

A prime suspect in the case linked the widowed eldest sister of the late foreign assistant secretary to the break-in at the Ramos home, which ended with the diplomat being killed by suffocation.

And it was all because of money, the suspect, Roberto "Obet" Lumagui, claimed during inquest proceedings at the Department of Justice.

Lumagui, said to be a handyman of the Ramoses, identified the widowed sister as Ester Balley, 65. Police gave her name as Ester Bailey.

Ester was described by a family friend as a painter who taught at the University of the Philippines.

The family friend, who asked not to be identified, expressed strong doubts that Ester would be involved with the three suspects.

"She would not do that because she really loved her sisters," the friend said, adding that Ester was in a hospital when the crime took place.

"She never hurt anybody in the hospital," the friend said.

He said Ester was being treated supposedly for bipolar disorder—or manic depression—which, he said, made her

BIZARRE/ A22

GMA meets top brass; Mike A visits camps

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Philip C. Tubeza

IT WAS business with pleasure for President Macapagal-Arroyo in Coron, Palawan, on Monday. But it was serious business. Ms Arroyo reportedly held a discreet meeting with a handful of top military officers led by Vice Adm. Ernesto de Leon.

An INQUIRER source said Ms Arroyo met with De Leon and the military top brass before she went scuba diving at Club Paradise in the afternoon.

The Office of the Press Secretary had not reported the President's Palawan schedule, which triggered speculation that Malacañang was conducting a loyalty check of the military forces a little over a week after an alleged Labor Day destabilization plot hatched by retired generals that did not materialize.

Rumors of an insecure Arroyo

GMA MEETS/ A8

Can you carry P130M in cash?

By Nelson F. Flores

HOW much does P130 million in P1,000 bills weigh?

About 130 kilos, said Rene Saguisag, who is seeking a mistrial for former President Joseph Estrada.

Estrada is being tried by the Sandiganbayan on plunder and perjury charges in connection with allegations that he received millions of pesos in payoffs from jueteng operators and kickbacks from tobacco excise taxes.

CAN YOU/ A6

BASTA PERA KAYANG BUHATIN!

Sta. Rosa mayor, guard shot dead

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Luige A. del Puerto

STA. ROSA CITY—After surviving an ambush two years ago, Sta. Rosa Mayor Leon Arcillas yesterday fell prey to the savagery of assassins.

Arcillas, 61, and a police bodyguard were fatally shot Tuesday morning inside City Hall in a daring attack that the Philippine National Police quickly blamed on communist gunmen.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao lost no time in creating a task force to investigate the mayor's murder and later relieved Supt. Joselito Vera Cruz as Sta. Rosa police chief. Lomibao appointed Supt. Pastor de Guzman to take over Vera Cruz's post.

Investigators said the attack took place near the second floor stairway of the City Hall annex around 10:30 a.m. after Arcillas

STA. ROSA/ A8

It's official: Dayrit quits health post

By Christian V. Esguerra

THIS comes straight from the horse's mouth: Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit is quitting his post.

Dayrit announced at a press conference yesterday that he was resigning from the Cabinet effective May 31. He said he wanted to "move on" and "do something else."

He insisted that he had not been pressured into leaving the

IT'S OFFICIAL/ A8

Bill's salient features: What's 'VAT-able,' what's not

By TJ Burgonio

THE BICAMERAL conference committee formally approved the compromise version of the value-added tax measure when it convened yesterday morning.

Last night, the Senate ratified the VAT measure by a vote of 13-9, but the House of Representatives failed to ratify the tax measure. The House suspended its session at 8:44 p.m. due to lack of quorum.

The following are the salient points of the compromise version of the VAT bill:

- An income tax of 35 percent is imposed on corporations from 32 percent provided that this will be 30 percent on Jan. 1, 2009.
- Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., one of government-owned and -controlled corporations previously exempted, shall pay corporate income tax.
- A 10-percent VAT shall be levied on goods or properties provided that the President shall raise the rate to 12 percent on Jan. 1, 2006 if the VAT collection exceeds 2.8 percent of the gross domestic product, or if the national government deficit exceeds 1.5 percent of GDP.
- The sale of goods, supplies, equipment and fuel to persons engaged in international shipping or international air transport operations shall be subject to zero-percent VAT rate.
- A VAT shall be levied on every importation of goods.
- A VAT shall be levied on gross receipts derived from the sale or exchange of services by among others, air and sea carriers regarding their transport of passengers, goods and cargoes within the country; sales of electricity by generation companies, transmission and distribution companies, and services of franchise grantees of electric utilities.

BILL'S/ A8

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with rainshowers. Mindanao including Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: ERIKA SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/05/11/05 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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Garcia starts court-martial defense

By Dona Pazzibugan

RETIRED Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia began his defense in court-martial yesterday, questioning the validity of the orders to file charges against him in connection with alleged unexplained wealth and his being a permanent resident of the United States.

For his first witness, Garcia's lawyers hailed former Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Narciso Abaya's head executive assistant to cast doubt on some of Abaya's written orders for Garcia's court martial.

For an hour, defense lawyer Constantino De Jesus made Col. Ariel Bernardo, who is now Army civil affairs group chief, describe their procedures for keeping documents.

De Jesus zeroed in on the Oct. 27, 2004 memo from the Office of the Provost Marshal to Abaya, which recommended that Garcia be charged for being a US greencard holder.

De Jesus took issue with the fact that the memo, which Abaya approved, was not stamped with a barcode. But under a brief cross examination, Bernardo told the court that the barcode was not necessary.

"Even without the presence of the barcode, it will not render the signature of the CS (Abaya) invalid. It will not make the document unofficial," he told military prosecutor Col. Pedro Davila.

He said the barcode was "just a security measure" to show that a document had passed through the Office of the Chief of Staff.

Bernardo also said Abaya had signed other documents not stamped with a barcode and did not pass through him "due to the exigencies of the situation."

Defense lawyer Jose Bautista later told reporters it was "highly suspicious" that Abaya signed the memo without going through the usual procedure.

Ninoy slay case closed, high court decides

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME Court yesterday denied with finality the petition to hold a new trial for the 16 soldiers convicted for the double murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. and Rolando Galman.

AQUINO

The Public Attorney's Office had filed the motion for reconsideration to have the case reopened in the light of new evidence on behalf of the 16 soldiers who are serving life terms for the double murder.

The SC said it was denying "with finality for lack of merit" the PAO's motion for the petitioners.

The high court in effect affirmed its earlier ruling that the "newly discovered evidence" was "unfounded and purely speculative."

In a resolution affirmed by 14 of 15 justices of the high tribunal, the SC said the petitioners failed to present "concrete facts to support their crass claim."

Unmoved

"Finally, we are not moved by the petitioners' assertion that the forensic evidence may have been manipulated and misinterpreted during the trial of the case," said the 25-page resolution penned by Associate Justice Reynato Puno.

The 16, who were convicted and sentenced to double-life imprisonment for the Aug. 21, 1983 killing of Aquino and Galman, late last year asked PAO chief Persida Rueda-Acosta to have their case reviewed by the "Independent Forensic Group of the University of the Philippines."

After the UP forensics came up with a new finding, they then filed a petition for a new and third trial where the new evidence could be presented.

According to the petitioners, they obtained new evidence "not available" during the trial, proving that there were "false forensic claims that led to the unjust conviction."

They said that it was not possible for Constable Rogelio Moreno to have fired at Aquino while he was going down the tarmac.

'Sham' trial

The first Sandiganbayan trial of 1985, which concluded that it was Galman who had shot Aquino and acquitted the then Armed Forces Chief Fabian Ver and 25 others, was declared a "sham."

A second Sandiganbayan trial in 1990 found the 16 accused guilty. It identified the gunman who shot Aquino as Moreno, one of three soldiers who boarded the plane and took Aquino seconds before he was shot.

The court also affirmed the findings of the Agrava Fact-finding Board that there had been a military conspiracy to kill Aquino, a former senator who was returning from the US to challenge the rule of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The second Sandiganbayan trial was unable to determine who was behind the conspiracy to kill the former senator. The justices noted that the broader question of who ordered the killing of Aquino could not be answered.

Custodio

Convicted of the crime were Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio, Capt. Romeo Bautista, 2nd Lt. Jesus Castro, and Seargents Claro L. Lat, Arnulfo de Mesa, Filomeno Miranda, Rolando de Guzman, Ernesto Mateo, Rodolfo Desolong, Ruben Aquino and Arnulfo Artates. Custodio died of cancer while in prison in 1991.

Also sentenced to life imprisonment were Moreno, Mario Lazaga, A1C Cordova Estelo and A1C Felizardo Taran.

The 16 were mostly members of the Aviation Security Command who took Aquino from the China Airlines plane at the then Manila International Airport on his return from exile in the United States.

The second Sandiganbayan trial acquitted 20 others that prosecutors said were accomplices in the conspiracy. They included Jose D. Aspiras, the then tourism minister; Maj. Gen. Prospero Olivas, then commander of the PC Metrocom; Jesus Singson, the former air transport minister; and Air Force Co. Arthur Custodio, former commander of the Villamor Airbase.

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Solons eye price controls, wage hike laws

By Philip C. Tubeza and Jerome Aning

A CAP on the prices of basic commodities or a legislated P125 wage increase are among the proposals put forward by legislators to cushion the impact of the P2 fare increase that the Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board approved on Monday.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles proposed that the President create an executive price control and regulatory task force for "socially sensitive products."

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano pushed for the passage of legislation proposing a P125 across-the-board wage increase while other legislators called for sobriety.

The National Wages and Productivity Commission, meanwhile, said the latest fare hike would be taken into account when the body decides on how much the minimum wage hike would be.

NWPC executive director Ciriaco Lagunzad III said the regional wage boards have already received copies of the fare increase order issued the other day by the LTFRB.

"They are already estimating what would be the effect of the fare hike on workers' purchasing power," he said.

Nograles said the President should immediately create the special task force to monitor and regulate the pricing of "socially sensitive" products such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), cooking oil, medicines, educational supplies and other basic commodities.

"Many of us might not survive this punishment if the government would not exercise its regulatory powers on the spiraling costs of socially sensitive products," he said.

The task force should put a price cap on these products until the government can put the economy back in shape, Nograles said.

Mariano said Malacañang should support the passage of the proposed P125 legislated wage hike in the wake of new rounds of increases in prices of oil and basic commodities.

"The Filipino people's demand for a wage hike has become more urgent, just and reasonable," Mariano said.

He said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye's comment that the fare hike was the price of "just two text messages" was arrogant and insulting.

Administration representatives called for sobriety and even public support for the fare increase.

They said the LTFRB had "to balance public interest and the plight of the transport sector, which has been hard hit by the series of oil price hikes."

Lakas-CMD Representatives Monico Puentevella, chair of the House committee on transportation, and Exequiel Javier, vice chair of the committee on energy, said they expected a rollback in fares once oil prices in the world market go down.

"The fare hike is just a temporary sacrifice. If we are able to fully implement our Energy Plan and secure our local energy sources, then we can lessen our dependence on oil imports," Puentevella said.

Lagunzad explained that the wage boards' researchers and statisticians were making their calculations on the effect of fare hike on family expenditures, using as model a family of six, of which two are employed and one to four members are commuting daily.

With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan and Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau

Tax task force spent P70M to collect P11M

By Nelson F. Flores

A PRESIDENTIAL task force investigating tax credit scams has spent P70 million in the last five years but only managed to recover P11 million of the more than P5.3 billion tax cheats estimated to have gotten away with.

And nobody has been sent to jail.

"This is how serious the government is in running after tax evaders," Renato Reyes, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) secretary general, said at a press conference yesterday.

Reyes, citing a report by lawyer Jose Isagani Torres, said members of Presidential Task Force 156—the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs and other government agencies—assigned to investigate and prosecute tax credit scams, should make a full report and accounting of their work.

Torres is the lawyer of Felix Chingkoe, who blew the whistle on the tax credit scam allegedly perpetrated by his brother Faustino.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada created Task Force 156 in 1999 to investigate and prosecute those involved in tax credit scams, including Department of Finance and other government personnel and their accomplices.

The task force is composed of the executive secretary as chair with the finance and justice undersecretaries; the executive director of the One-Stop Shop Center and the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force chief as members. Its first assignment was to investigate the P5.3-billion tax credit scam at the OSSC allegedly committed in 1995-98.

Reyes said that of the 1,652 fraudulently acquired tax credit certificates totaling P5.349 billion, the BOC filed only 60 civil cases involving P2.49 billion.

Of the 60 cases, 15 were dismissed for lack of interest to prosecute and seven are scheduled for dismissal for the same reason. Five cases were settled for 20 percent of their original amounts, while 33 cases are pending in court.

The BIR, Reyes said, does not lag behind the BOC in performance. He said the bureau has filed only four cases in the Court of Tax Appeals.

One case involving Pilipinas Shell was dismissed for lack of evidence, causing the government to lose P684 million, he said. Three other cases are pending with no clear end in sight.

"The government is letting these influential tax cheats off the hook," Reyes said.

In a related development, Felix Chingkoe yesterday appealed to the BIR to stop the sale of his brother Faustino's properties that are the subject of a multimillion-peso suit that grew out of a tax credit scam.

Chingkoe, speaking to newsmen, said Faustino had begun disposing of his properties preparatory to fleeing the country, but the BIR has refused to act. He said the BIR instead told him to go to court and get a temporary restraining order.

Chingkoe lamented that witnesses who tried to help the government run after his brother were the ones who were charged by Task Force 156, while Faustino and his family were allowed to leave the Philippines for Canada.

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NGOs to file raps vs past PCA officials

By Blanche S. Rivera

NGO leaders yesterday said they were considering filing malversation and plunder charges against officials of the Philippine Coconut Authority during the Ramos administration for allegedly failing to account for a $121.8-million World Bank loan intended for the development of the coconut industry.

The loan was extended by the WB for the Small Coconut Farmers Development Program (SCFDP) implemented by the PCA from 1991 to 2000.

The issue was raised at a forum yesterday by the Freedom from Debt Coalition, Philippine Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services, and Peace Foundation.

They cited reports from the Commission on Audit, showing that the PCA officials during the Ramos administration did not present receipts, documents or inventory reports on the fertilizers that were supposed to have been purchased by the PCA.

The organizations are keen on filing malversation and plunder charges against Gen. Virgilio David, a former PCA administrator who is still in the PCA board, as well as other PCA officials for allegedly failing to account for how the loan was spent.

David, who was PCA administrator from 1993 to 1998, said that during his term, the financial records of the agency were intact. He said if there were any irregularities, they could have happened after his time.

Charles Avila was PCA administrator in 1992. From 1998 to 2000, the agency was headed by lawyer Eduardo Escueta.

David said that during his term, the SCFDP program was one of only 25 WB projects that were renewed by the multilateral agency.

"That would not have happened if there were any irregularities," he said.

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How to trap PDI reporters the Ping way: Get them to testify

By Norman Bordadora

SEN. PANFILO Lacson yesterday said the Senate would save itself trouble by summoning the INQUIRER reporters who wrote about alleged jueteng lords M1, M2 and JS7 and prying from them the identities of their news sources.

Intelligent questioning

Lacson said that while he did not expect the INQUIRER reporters to reveal their sources, the needed information might still be obtained through intelligent questioning.

"It all depends on how you ask the questions," Lacson said, referring to the planned Senate hearing on the extent of jueteng operations in the country.

"What if [the reporter] and [the source] are seated beside each other? They can be asked things such as if they know each other and when was the last time they talked to each other," Lacson said.

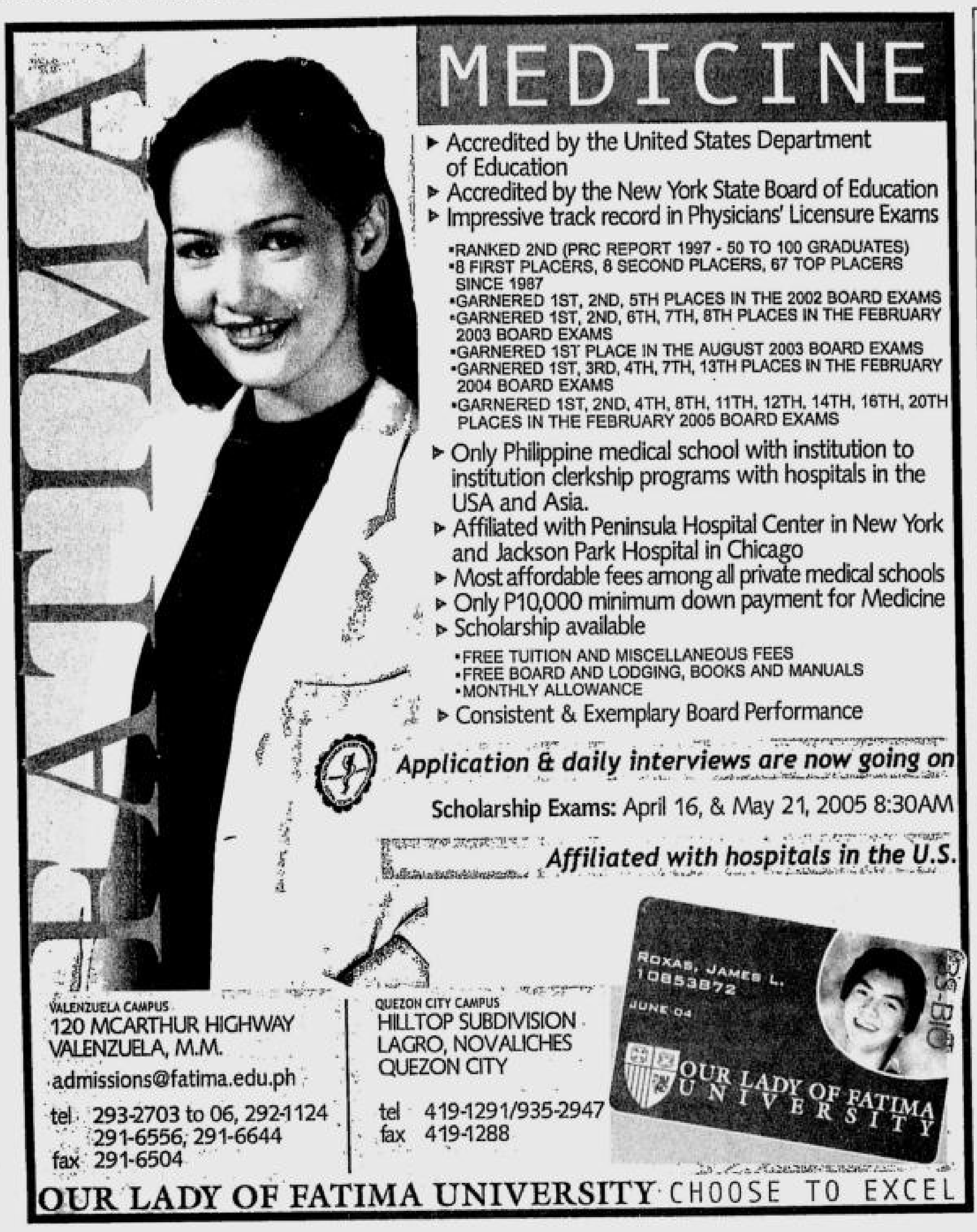
Lacson said he had received information that the INQUIRER source for the story was a police official still in the chain of command but no longer in the "chain of [jueteng] collection."

Actual players

The opposition senator said he had five witnesses in line to implicate national and local government officials in the illegal numbers game.

He said his witnesses were actual players in jueteng operations and collections.

"They want a guarantee that they will not be incriminated," Lacson said.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Correction

IN THE May 10 issue of the INQUIRER (Page A7)—the story "Groups launch scholarship program"—misspelled one of the groups offering scholarship for children of murdered journalists as Bevey Mabey Foundation. It should have been Bevil Mabey Study Foundation.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses: glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent, pending the appointment of a new readers' advocate, to Isagani Yambot, publisher, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address: iyambot@inquirer.com.ph.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 11, 2005
7th Week of Easter

1st Reading: **Acts 20:28-38**
Gospel: **John 17:11-19**

Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed, "I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world whereas I am going to you. Holy Father, keep them in your Name (that you have given me,) so that they may be one, just as we are.

"When I was with them, I kept them safe in your Name, and not one was lost except the one who was already lost, and in this the Scripture was fulfilled. But now I am coming to you and I leave these my words in the world that my joy may be complete in them.

"I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world; just as I am not of the world. I do not ask you to remove them from the world but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world; consecrate them in the truth—your word is truth.

"I have sent them into the world as you sent me into the world, and for their sake, I go to the sacrifice by which I am consecrated, so that they too may be consecrated in truth."

Commentary

Jesus continues praying for us so that we will be kept in God's Name, in communion of heart and life. While he was with us in the flesh he held us together in his presence but now he is coming home to the Father and he leaves us with his words that will bring joy to us. His word is his gift to us, for protection, for courage, insight, understanding, power and truth and we are to hold fast to this Word and stay in the world and know that Jesus has prayed that we will be kept from the evil one that hinders us from living as the children of God. Jesus consecrates us in truth, in God's word and his own word to us. And we will be sent into the world, as Jesus was, consecrated in Jesus' word, and in his body given as sacrifice in death. This is the only sacrifice that God wants of us—what Jesus gave—his word, his life and his obedience in love. This is what Jesus prays that we give to God.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (TORTS AND DAMAGES)—Recovery of moral damages—The law on damages prescribes that in order that one can have redress for an act which caused him damage, the act must not only be hurtful, it must also be wrongful. There must be damnum et enjuria. All in all, in order to recover moral damages, the claimant must prove the following: (1) there must be an injury, whether physical, mental or psychological, clearly sustained by the claimant; (2) there must be a culpable act or omission factually established; (3) the wrongful act or omission of the defendant is the proximate cause of the injury sustained by the claimant; and (4) the award of damages is predicated on any of the cases stated in Article 2219 of the Civil Code. The evidence supports respondent Acena's claim for moral damages against petitioner Estolas. The actuations of petitioner Estolas in booting-out respondent Acena as Administrative Officer, which the latter held in a permanent capacity, and in forcing the position of Associate Professor - undisputedly a temporary position - down his throat, fall squarely within Article 21 of the Civil Code on human relations. On the witness stand, respondent Acena testified that as a direct result of petitioner Estolas's actuations, he felt insulted, embarrassed and humiliated. He suffered "serious anxiety, moral shock, sleepness nights" and even had to resort to "minimum tanquilizer." (Citations omitted.) (Justice Chico-Nazario, Second Division, Estolas v. Acena, G.R. NO. 157070, January 14, 2005) By R. B. Vera

Visionary National Artist Ang Kiukok dies

From page A1

KIUKOK

longed battle with cancer. He was 74.

"He is such a great loss," said veteran painter and Asia Art Gallery owner James Onglepho, Ang's friend and classmate at the University of Santo Tomas in the 1950s. "He painted works that are a major contribution to Philippine art and an indelible influence on other artists and the way we look at art."

In the past years, as he fought a losing battle against cancer, Ang's works had become the toast of the regional art scene, picking up large bids in the biannual Southeast Asian auctions of Sotheby's and Christie's.

Best selling in auctions

According to the Asia.Now online news service of Time magazine and CNN, Ang Kiukok was the best-selling Filipino artist in the auctions, aside from Fernando Amorsolo, another National Artist.

But while Amorsolo's works are the darling of collectors for their idyllic sweetness and postcard-pretty qualities, Ang's works are noted for their depictions of "ugly" scenes, such as rabid dogs and wild cocks warped in violence.

The violence and "ugliness" is really the staple of expression cast in lines and color states of mental derangement and psychological displacement that the style's proponents claim should reflect the modern era of nihilism and social collapse.

Figurative expressionism

The more prominent form of expressionism is abstract, but Ang is acclaimed for his striking representational gifts, so that his style is often called "figurative expressionism."

His figures of nude lovers in the heat of passion do not emphasize the beauty of the anatomy, but the twisted fire of their love-making, so that their bodies writhe in violent contortion and earthly ecstasy.

Ang's depiction of the Christ also often emphasized his agony and crucifixion, a prefigurement of the blood-and-gore depiction that was later to be the hallmark of Mel Gibson's controversial movie, "The Passion of the Christ."

His colors either complement or tame the violence of the figures. In many of his depictions of Christ, Ang used monochromatic colors that highlight the spikes and nails of Jesus, thus endowing the motif of the crucifixion with an industrial dimension. His nude figures are painted in starkly bright colors, perhaps to suggest that there is universality in the deepest of intimacies.

Faithful collectors

Because of Ang's unorthodox choice of subject matters, the art market had been slow to acquire a taste for Ang Kiukok. It was only in the mid-1980s that the artist really established himself as a top seller, a reputation that was built on the staunch support of a motley group of faithful collectors, such as the businessman Paulino Que.

For all their violence and "ugliness," Ang's works are seared with spiritual fire. They are intensely personal works from a deeply visionary artistry.

Despite the European sensibility and motif of his works, Ang Kiukok was an ethnic Chinese who was born on March 1, 1931, in Davao City.

In 1952, he took up art studies at UST's then College of Architecture and Fine Arts, the birthplace of the modernist art movement in the Philippines, where his classmates included Onglepho and Ong Bungian, similarly acclaimed Filipino artists of Chinese ancestry. His professors included Victorio Edades, Vicente Manansala, Carlos "Botong" Francisco, Galo Ocampo and the Italian sculptor, Francesco Monti. He won major prizes in the Shell and the Art Association of the Philippines contests.

Rare tribute

In 2000, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila held a retrospective of Ang's works, a rare tribute since only Amorsolo and Manansala had been accorded such before.

In 2001, President Macapagal-Arroyo named him National Artist.

In an interview with the Varsitarian newspaper of UST in 2002, Ang said his father named him "Ang Hua Shing," but changed it when it was learned a cousin already had that name. The artist was renamed "Kiukok," which means "to save the country."

Ang's remains lie at the La Funeraria Paz on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be announced later, the funeral house said.

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Telcos admit allowing gov't agents with court orders to tap phones

By Clarissa S. Batino

WIRE-TAPPING is illegal but not if the government has a court order that would allow agents to eavesdrop on phone conversations or trace call records to solve crimes like terrorism and kidnapping, telecom executives said yesterday.

After the Abu Sayyaf kidnapping of tourists at the Dos Palmas resort in 2001, government agents obtained a court order that allowed them to eavesdrop on the networks of Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc. for a week.

That was the only time mobile phone companies remember having allowed the government to eavesdrop on phone conversations.

Every once in a while, the National Bureau of Investigation—armed with a court order—would ask telcos to provide a call history of suspects, mostly in kidnapping cases.

"We have not had any case of government tapping our network without a court order," said Smart president Napoleon Nazareno.

Huge volume

What is not possible here, according to telecom officials, is for them to produce a copy of text messages sent through the network.

Neither Smart nor Globe has the capacity to store text messages in its database given the sheer volume they handle daily.

Smart handles between 180 and 200 million messages a day, while Globe accounts for about 122 million texts daily. Each of the combined 33 million subscribers of the two giants sends an average of 10 messages a day.

Electrical impulses

Nazareno said a text message only passes through the network "for a micro-second" before it reaches the recipient.

The company's lawyer, Rogelio Quevedo, said each text message "only passes the switches as an electrical impulse."

"The only thing we can trace is from whom the message came and to whom it was sent. We have no way of knowing its content," noted Quevedo.

Froilan Castelo, assistant vice president of Globe, said he had received requests from subscribers for copies of text messages.

Anti-'jueteng' bishop bugged by 'echoes, voices' in phone

From page A1

bly being bugged.

People close to the outspoken bishop have voiced similar complaints and a check with "insiders in the telecommunications industry" showed there were indications that he was being wire-tapped, Cruz said yesterday.

Citing information he said he had obtained from people from mobile phone companies, Cruz told the INQUIRER the easiest to tap was a land line.

"They told me that wire-tapping was also possible with cellular phones," he said.

3 occasions

Since he stepped up his attacks on the illegal numbers game in the country and the people behind it two weeks ago, Cruz said he had been hearing "echoes" on his line.

"On at least three occasions, I shouted and told the person who might have been eavesdropping never to fool with me," he said. "The echo ceased for some time but it returned soon. It's never left my phone ever since."

Cruz also said that once last year, three unidentified men in a red sedan were seen taking pictures of his house in Dagupan City in Pangasinan.

No fish vendor

Cruz said he and his driver caught up with the trio after a brief car chase.

"What do you want? Why are you taking pictures of my house?" he said he asked the three men. "Then they replied that they were simply looking for some *bangus* (milkfish)."

"It was a ridiculous excuse because you look for fish in the market, not in a bishop's house," he said.

Mysterious owner

Cruz said he later checked with the Land Transportation Office and was told that the men's car fell under the "classified ownership" list.

As such, the car's owner could not be revealed, he said.

Cruz said that on Sunday night, he sent text messages to friends and reporters, inquiring if electronic surveillance was possible on mobile phones.

He said a friend, an "industry insider," had warned his phone may have been tapped.

Cruz said another cell phone company insider told him it was possible for someone powerful, like people in government, to secure a list of a user's text messages.

Another source told the bishop that a mobile phone could be tapped within a 2-km radius.

Frequent death threats

"I even got A-1 information that the government has facilities to tap cell phone calls but they're not enough to tap all," he said.

Cruz refused to say if the supposed bugging was a result of his condemnation of jueteng and of the government officials who he said were benefiting from the P13-billion industry.

What seems to be clear is that the bishop has been getting an increasing number of death threats these past several days.

Cruz said he had been getting threats through his cell phone or on the land line at his house in Dagupan at least every two days.

Message is clear

The messages were the same: Stop talking about jueteng.

The list of alleged jueteng operators that Cruz submitted to Congress last week contained names of high-profile personalities, including five incumbent governors, a vice governor and a mayor.

A top police official allegedly receiving P19.6 million in monthly jueteng payoffs and a government commissioner related to a former Cabinet official were also on the list.

Bishop's bodyguard

Cruz was also in touch with Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel, who has furnished fellow Sen. Lito Lapid a list of 24 people to be summoned in an upcoming hearing on jueteng operations.

Despite the threats on his life, the bishop seemed unfazed.

"There's still a God," he said.

Can you carry ₱130M in cash?

From page A1

The P130 million represented the kickbacks from the excise taxes that Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson had claimed he gave to Estrada in August 1998 through their gambling buddy, Charlie "Atong" Ang.

Ocular inspection

In a petition seeking an ocular inspection of Estrada's home, Saguisag suggested to the Sandiganbayan to direct the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to produce P130 million and bring the cash to Estrada's home at No. 1 Polk St. in Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Too heavy

His point was that the cash was too heavy for anyone to carry into Estrada's residence.

"People not used to carrying heavy loads would risk serious injury by tempting their disk to slip. It is doubtful that the normal person can carry two unwieldy boxes weighing more than a sack of rice," Saguisag said.

The defense lawyer said "[i]t was improbable for Ang to have carried so much money in the time and space described by Singson."

The Sandiganbayan granted yesterday Saguisag's motion to allow an ocular inspection of Estrada's home.

One condition

In his testimony at the impeachment trial of Estrada in the Senate in December 2000, Singson said he asked then President Estrada in July 1998 to release P200 million in government funds representing part of Ilocos Sur's share of tobacco excise taxes under Republic Act No. 7171.

Singson said the President agreed to release the funds on condition that he would get 10 percent "to help pay for some of his expenses."

But Singson said Ang persuaded him to give the President P130 million.

After the Department of Budget released the P200 million to the Ilocos Sur provincial government, Singson said he made a cash advance of P170 million, P40 million of which was spent for tobacco flue-curing and P130 million to be given to Estrada.

Singson said he issued three checks amounting to P130 million in August 1998. After the checks were encashed, Ang placed the money in several *bayongs* (bags made of woven buri palm leaves). On their way to the Estrada residence, Ang allegedly told Singson to wait outside until he had gotten inside the house and delivered the money.

Singson testified at the impeachment trial that Ang distributed the P130 million in the following manner: P70 million to Estrada, P20 million to then First Lady Loi Ejercito, P15 million to then San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada and P25 million for himself.

BSP to provide bills

The Sandiganbayan special division presided over by Justice Teresita de Castro said that because the prosecution panel was earlier given the opportunity to demonstrate in court the weight of P20 million in demonetized bills of P1,000 denomination, "it is but fair to allow the defense the opportunity to rebut said presentation."

The decision was concurred in by Justices Diosdado Peralta and Rodolfo Ponferrada.

The court directed the defense lawyers to make the necessary arrangements with the BSP to produce the P130 million in demonetized P1,000 bills, "unless the BSP deems it appropriate that such autoptic preference be done in one of its facilities."

(Autoptic preference means presenting in open court articles for observation or inspection by the tribunal.)

However, the special division, which was created for the sole purpose of hearing Estrada's cases, declined to rule on the mistrial motion of the defense panel.

Four boxes

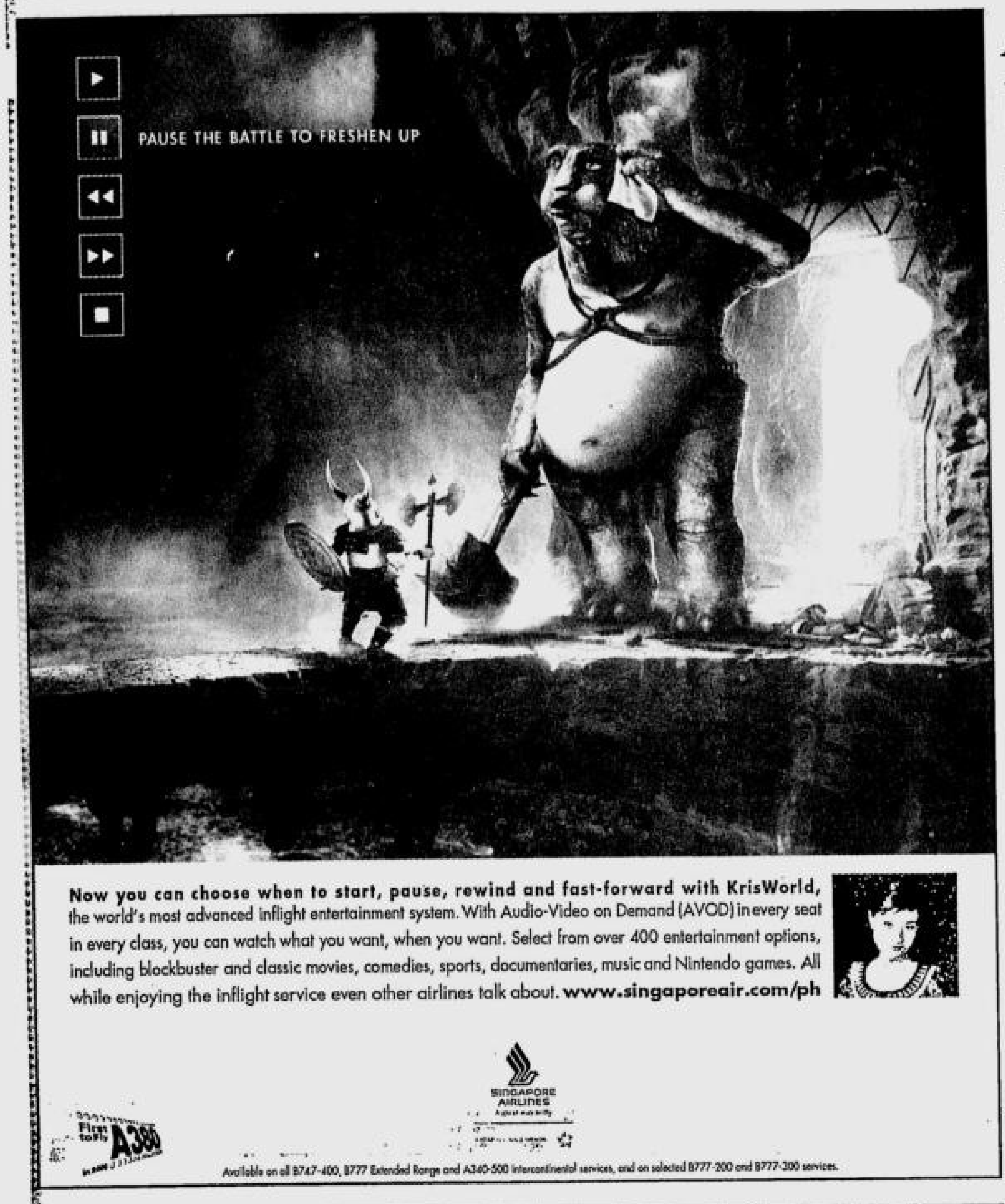
Saguisag said the Sandiganbayan justices, staff and prosecutors "should join, not thwart" the proposed ocular inspection or "autoptic preference" because there was a need to verify Singson's claim.

"We need to have an idea then how many times Ang supposedly undertook the task. Presidential homes, like the official one, always crawl with people, beginning with security. Only an ocular inspection can settle the distances and related issues concerned," he said.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said that except for Saguisag, nobody was claiming, Singson included, that the cash equivalent of the P130 million was brought in one bag to Estrada's house.

Villa-Ignacio said it was clear, based on the witnesses' testimony, the money was brought into Estrada's house in four boxes.

"We are amused by Saguisag's manifestation," Villa-Ignacio, who opposed Saguisag's motion for an ocular inspection, said.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No formula for oil prices, House told

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy yesterday found itself in a bad light following an admission by its official in charge with monitoring oil companies that there was no fixed formula to determine whether petroleum products were overpriced or not.

So instead of being enlightened on the pricing mechanism being used by the oil firms, lawmakers ended up more confused at a hearing called by the House committee on trade and industry yesterday.

"If we, lawmakers, can't understand a thing about what you're saying, how much more the ordinary people?" asked committee chair Rep. Junie Cua, addressing the question to Amelita Obillo, deputy director of the DOE's Oil Industry Monitoring Bureau.

Obillo attended the hearing on behalf of Energy Usec. Peter Abaya.

Cua said he could understand when officials of Petron Corp., Caltex, Pilipinas Shell and Total refused to disclose their pricing formula. "It's part of their trade secrets. But the government should be able to explain it to us," said Cua.

Cua then gave Obillo an "assignment" to bring along Abaya next time, and come up with visual aids to better explain how oil companies arrived at their petroleum prices.

But Zambales Rep. Milagros Magsaysay said the DOE, oil companies and the consumer oil price watch were subscribing to the price of Dubai crude as the benchmark in computing oil price adjustments.

"They compute it the same way, so why it is that they arrive at different prices?" said Magsaysay, who did not mince words in accusing the DOE representative of "not honest and comprehensive in answering" questions.

Groping in the dark

"You yourself can't explain it to us," Magsaysay said. "[T]his is the second hearing, yet we're still groping in the dark."

Obillo enraged the congressional panel when she said that she did not think that there was an oil cartel in the country.

"Prices are uniformly adjusted to catch the prices of their competitors," said Obillo, disclosing that oil companies based their computations on the automatic pricing mechanism crafted by the Energy Regulatory Board.

Mayor acquitted in slay attempt on Bicol radio man

LEGAZPI CITY—Tension gripped the packed courtroom in the Hall of Justice here shortly after the verdict was read.

"Not guilty!" was the decision rendered by presiding Judge Vladimir B. Brusola of the Regional Trial Court, 5th Judicial Region, in acquitting Jovellar town Mayor Jose "Boy" Arcangel in the attempted murder case filed against him by the late radio broadcaster Rowell Endrinal. The judge cited self-defense.

Arcangel had shot Endrinal several times outside a hotel here at around 3 a.m. on Oct. 10, 2000, after a heated argument that started in the hotel's restaurant. Endrinal survived and subsequently filed charges.

His widow, Marina, broke down when she heard the verdict.

As she was being led out of the courtroom, Marina assailed the judge's decision and the accused.

"Indeed, we cannot find justice here anymore. Just think of it—we have lost a case out of blind justice after five years of hearings. Right now, I don't know what to do next.

"It's going to be very, very hard for us to attain justice in another case we filed against the suspects who killed my husband," Marina said.

Endrinal, an outspoken radio commentator, was killed in February 2004 by two men who pumped five bullets into him as he was walking outside his house in Barangay Oro Site in this city.

Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) chair Dante Jimenez also reacted negatively to the verdict.

"There is no more justice here in Bicol," he said.

Members of the media also voiced disappointment at Brusola's decision, which was supposed to be promulgated on Tuesday last week but was delayed after the judge said he had not finished it yet.

Jimenez said the delay gave them an idea Arcangel would be acquitted.

He said they thought the focus of the case would have been on the attempted murder of Endrinal but this was shifted to the alleged provocation and the carrying of a gun by the victim.

"It's really absurd that there was a sudden change in the [direction] of the case," Jimenez said.

In an interview later, Brusola said the verdict was not appealable.

Asked why, he said, "Because that is what is written in the law books."

Brusola had noted in his decision that Arcangel acted "in defense of his person or rights." *Gil Francis G. Arevalo, Jed Ll. Bacason, Leo Martin B. Ganace, Michael B. Jaucian and Niño Jesus Y. Orbeta, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Compromise VAT bill challenged

By Norman Bordadora and Michael Lim Ubac

SENATE Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel questioned yesterday the constitutionality of granting President Macapagal-Arroyo standby authority to raise the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent.

The minority in the House of Representatives earlier said it would challenge the VAT measure before the Supreme Court.

While the Constitution delegates to the President the power to modify tariff rates, import and export quotas, and tonnage and wharfage dues, the privilege does not cover tax rates, according to Pimentel.

"It is a bad compromise because it trivializes the constitutional prohibition against legislation by the Chief Executive. It will constitute undue delegation of legislative power to the President in matters of taxation," he said.

Pimentel said members of the bicameral conference committee "seem to have equated tariff and customs duties with taxes when in fact they are very much different from each other."

Wary of a voter backlash amid rising fuel and food prices, members of Congress effectively passed the buck to Ms Arroyo, giving her the authority to raise the VAT rate to 12 percent from 10 percent early next year.

Half of the seats in the Senate and all of those in the House are up for election in 2007.

Under the compromise version, Ms Arroyo could raise the VAT rate to 12 percent beginning Jan. 1, 2006, if the national government deficit exceeds 1.5 percent of the gross domestic product or if the VAT collection exceeds 2.8 percent of GDP.

Estimates from the Department of Finance said the VAT bill would generate P28 billion to P31 billion in the remaining months of the year, and between P97 billion and P105 billion every year starting 2006.

Bill's salient features: What's 'VAT-able' . . .

From page A1

The following shall be subject to zero-percent VAT rate:

- Services rendered to a person abroad by country-based individuals (such as those services by call centers).
- Services by persons engaged in international air transport operations, including leases of property.
- Transport of passengers and cargo by air or sea vessels from the Philippines to a foreign country.
- Sale of power or fuel generated through renewable sources of energy such as biomass, solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, ocean energy and other emerging energy sources using technologies such as fuel cells and hydrogen fuels.

The exemptions of the following are lifted:

- Sale of non-food agricultural products; marine and forest products in their original state by the primary producer or owner of the land.
- Sale of cotton and cotton seeds in their original state and copra.
- Sale or importation of coal and natural gas.
- Sale or importation of raw materials to be used by the buyer or importer himself in the manufacture of petroleum products.
- Importation of passenger and/or cargo vessels of more than 5,000 tons, whether coast-wise or ocean-going.
- Sale by the artist himself of his works of art, literary works, musical compositions and similar creations.
- Sale by electric cooperatives registered with the Cooperative Development Authority or National Electrification Administration.

Exemptions

The following are exempted from VAT:

- Sale, importation or lease of passenger or cargo vessels and aircraft.
- Importation of fuel, goods and supply by persons engaged in international shipping or air transport operations.

Kerosene, diesel, bunker fuel and locally extracted natural gas, and liquefied natural gas will not be subject to excise tax.

Individuals covered by VAT:

- Those whose annual gross sales or receipts have exceeded P1.5 million. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Top coco levy exec quits

From page A1

me, no matter how untrue and unfair, it may well serve your administration if I should tender my resignation..." he said.

Golez's admission on radio of his lavish lifestyle had appalled Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, who said yesterday that he should have observed the President's austerity measures.

"It is really shocking to me," Boncodin told radio station dzBB. "It's good that this has been exposed to the public. At the end of the day, nobody can keep a secret. It's bound to be revealed."

Boncodin also said that while some people in the CIIF might have envied Golez for his lifestyle, most of them "couldn't stomach him anymore."

Haydee Yorac, resigned chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, had earlier written the UCPB board questioning the use of the coconut levy funds for the extravagant perks that Golez and other CIIF officials had been enjoying.

In a radio interview a day after Yorac's April 27 letter was reported, Golez admitted receiving a sport utility vehicle for his use, spending P25,000 weekly on gasoline and traveling abroad eight times with his wife. But he said all these were part of his compensation package.

'Sacrificial lamb'

Golez, a certified public accountant and a commerce graduate of the Lyceum of the Philippines, became a UCPB director in February 2002 and CIIF president and CEO in November 2003.

Sources close to Golez, who asked not to be named, said he was devastated by the criticisms leveled at him.

"He felt he was a sacrificial lamb," said a source.

Asked to elaborate, the source could only say that Golez had been on top of a 2003 audit of the "special accounts" at UCPB of companies owned by San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

Another source said Golez decided to resign after consulting his family.

"He's hoping to be cleared by the [UCPB] review committee," the source said.

According to the sources, Malacañang was initially considering a certain Dunga Lim, a major copra dealer in Leyte, as Golez's replacement, but has since dropped the idea.

'Small farmers' ally'

In an interview with the Inquirer, a fellow UCPB director quoted Golez as saying that he had had enough: *"Ayoko na, pare!"*

The director, who also requested anonymity, said he had informed Golez over the phone about the letter of the UCPB review committee stating that he was being formally asked to reply to some questions.

"I had no inkling that he had already resigned from both posts. He just told me he would be ready with his formal explanation," the director said, adding:

"We are really saddened by his decision. The small coconut farmers lost an ally in Golez."

Another UCPB director described Golez as "apolitical."

He said that as a board member, Golez had always voted for programs favoring the small coconut farmers.

"Golez's main contribution in the UCPB and CIIF that we would consider pro-farmer is his conceptualization of the farmers' direct copra marketing program, which actually removes the intervention of middlemen and directs the income to the small farmers," the director said.

A candidate for a master's degree in business administration at the Ateneo de Manila University, Golez worked as a junior partner at the accounting firm Sycip, Gorres and Velayo in the 1970s.

He moved to the finance group of Lepanto Mining Corp. in the 1980s.

He was a director of Iligan Coconut Mills Inc. and held senior executive positions in Diamant Board Philippines Inc. and other Lepanto companies.

'Expeditious' inquiry

Perez is chairing a special review committee—which includes UCPB directors Ruben Carranza Jr. and Rosalinda Casiguran and farmers' representatives Romeo Royandoyan and Jose Marie Faustino—to look into the points that Yorac had raised.

The investigation, Perez said, would be conducted "thoroughly and expeditiously."

Perez said the CIIF companies had been ordered to submit pertinent documents to allow the committee to determine whether certain operating expenses were reasonable.

He said the committee had issued interim guidelines to govern expenses pending the completion of the inquiry.

In conducting the investigation, the UCPB board is reasserting its control over the CIIF companies "after the PCGG deliberately separated the actual administration in 2002."

For the last three years, the CIIF companies have elected their own chairs, who do not report to the UCPB board.

GMA meets top brass; Mike A visits camps

From page A1

administration conducting loyalty checks have been bolstered by the series of personal visits of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo to strategic military bases, ongoing up to next week.

But Ms Arroyo's camp stressed that the First Gentleman visited the Southern Command in Zamboanga City and the Army's 103th Brigade in Basilan during the weekend to personally oversee the distribution of free dentures and financial doleouts to soldiers using money from his private foundation.

Special treat for soldiers

In brief remarks to soldiers during these charity events, the First Gentleman said these initiatives were the brainchild of the soldiers' "commander in chief." He said the President had decided to give the soldiers special treatment because she considered them special.

Speculation that the First Gentleman's charity program was being used as a cover for the administration's loyalty check program is unlikely to die down soon.

Key military camps

The First Gentleman is expected to bring his denture and cataract programs to two more military camps in the next seven days—to the Western Command in Palawan and Southern Luzon Command in Lucena, two key military bases that were reportedly the target of a recruitment drive by alleged destabilizers.

Denial

But a Palace official, who refused to be identified, denied that a presidential, hush-hush meeting took place in Palawan last Monday. The same official noted that De Leon joined the trip because the presidential yacht, Ang Pangulo, was used for the trip.

At the House of Representatives, the Palawan incident yesterday found resonance in a question posed in the committee on constitutional amendments: Can the country endure another five years of President Arroyo?

This question was raised by Batangas Rep. Hermilando Mandanas (Liberal Party) as the committee began deliberations on proposed amendments to the country's basic law to avoid a repeat of Edsa-type uprisings.

Mandanas himself answered the question. "My answer is yes, only if President Macapagal-Arroyo will really be perceived as a champion of far-reaching changes in the country, of course, within the bounds of the Constitution," he added.

Changes urgent

Mandanas said the worsening economic crisis, perceived lawlessness and reported destabilization attempts against the administration might again lead to another people power uprising.

He and other committee members urged the President to take a more direct hand in the campaign to shift the country's form of government from the presidential to a parliamentary type, adding that the latter would allow a change in administration without the people taking to the streets.

"There is an urgent need for change right now. Let this be an 'administration coup' within the framework of the Constitution," Mandanas said.

"If we take more time, another Edsa [uprising] might happen," he said.

Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco urged the President to call a joint meeting of the Senate and House committees on constitutional amendments to hasten Charter change.

The House committee had already approved a resolution calling for Congress to convene as a constituent assembly to change the Charter. This proposal is expected to be taken up by the entire House in August.

"This is the 'leaning' of the President today ... We do not want another Edsa III. Change is imperative," said Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula, the committee chair.

However, the Senate had made its position clear that any changes in the 1987 Constitution should be done through a constitutional convention and not a constituent assembly, Cuenco noted.

Must happen before '07

Jaraula also said Charter change must happen before the 2007 elections because senators who have presidential aspirations in 2010 would certainly block it if it happened later.

He said there were five or six aspirants in the Senate who wanted to run for President or Vice President in 2010.

"Their positions will be dictated by their perception of their ability to run. If they're looking at 2010, they will never give in," Jaraula said.

"Our only hope is for [Charter] change by 2007. After 2007, (there's) no way. [So] our position is we must go full-blast," he said.

Jaraula said that some committee members were already meeting with their Senate counterparts to convince them of the immediacy of Charter change. Cuenco proposed the creation of a sub-committee which would continuously meet with senators.

GMA's unpopularity

However, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Joel Virador said Charter change should not be tied to the rise and fall of the President's popularity.

"As of this time, I cannot see any relation with the present unpopularity of the President," Virador said.

He said it was the administration's proposed bills that led to Ms Arroyo's unpopularity.

Sta. Rosa mayor, guard shot dead

From page A1

finished officiating the weddings of 15 couples.

One of the assailants, whom investigators and witnesses described as a woman, shook hands with Arcillas, drew out a .45-cal. automatic, and shot the mayor in the head and abdomen.

The mayor was rushed to the University of Perpetual Help Hospital in Biñan, Laguna, where he succumbed shortly after noon to at least three gunshot wounds in the head.

Other gunmen opened fire on PO2 Erwin Rivera and PO3 Nonoy Almendras, both security aides of the mayor. Rivera died on the spot. Almendras was wounded, but doctors at the University of Perpetual Help Hospital said he was in stable condition.

Witnesses said the assailants fled on foot. Officials said one of the mayor's six bodyguards managed to fire back at the assailants, but they quickly blended in with the crowd and escaped. Police said the building was packed with about a hundred people during the killing.

Skull severely damaged

Dr. Elvis Bedia, the attending physician, said the mayor's skull was severely damaged. "He was practically dead on arrival but we still tried to revive him. We eventually lost him at around 12:05 p.m. The damage to his brain was just enormous," Bedia told the Inquirer.

Chief Supt. Marcelino Franco, head of the PNP Special Action Force, said Arcillas had sought police protection after receiving death threats from communist New People's Army rebels. The mayor reportedly incurred the ire of militant organizations after he was tagged as the mastermind in last year's killing of urban poor leader Melita Trinidad Carvajal.

The Inquirer tried to get the reaction of communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, but his cell phone just kept on ringing.

'Well-planned'

Lomibao said the killing appeared to be "well-planned." Arcillas, who was on his third and last term as mayor, had been regularly officiating weddings on Tuesdays and Thursdays since he assumed office in 1998.

Investigators also said they found a brand-new girdle with a price tag inside the women's toilet of the City Hall annex and a padding for the girdle inside the men's toilet. They said the assailants may have used the girdles to hide their guns.

They said the guns may have been smuggled into the building earlier and hidden in the ceilings of the toilets.

Woman among gunmen

It was unclear how many were involved in the attack. Arcillas' secretary, Sony Cerdena, quoted witnesses as saying there were at least three assailants, including a woman.

An investigator of the Sta. Rosa police, however, said there were four gunmen.

Lomibao visited the murder scene later in the afternoon and presented the artist's sketches of two of the assailants.

He also appointed Senior Supt. Federico Terte, the Laguna police chief, as head of Task Force Arcillas.

Investigators said they were looking into the possibility that Tuesday's killing may have had something to do with the ambush of Arcillas nearly two years ago.

First ambush

Arcillas was in his vehicle after attending a meeting of the homeowners' association of the Amihan Subdivision in Barangay Tagapo when a motorcycle-riding gunman shot him. He sustained a gunshot wound in his thigh.

The gunman was never arrested, but a land dispute was reportedly behind the ambush.

Task Force Arcillas is providing close-in security to the mayor's widow and four children, one of whom is a city councilor and another the chair of the SK Federation in Laguna.

It's official: Dayrit . . .

From page A1

post he has held for over four years, apparently meaning to douse heated speculations that his resignation was intended to accommodate Francisco Duque III, president and CEO of Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth).

But it was Duque himself who had earlier indicated that Dayrit was on the way out.

Duque, who is perceived to be one of the main men behind President Macapagal-Arroyo's victory in the 2004 election, told reporters at a May 5 press conference in Tacloban City that an unnamed Malacañang official had "offered" him the health portfolio. He said he would not refuse the supposed offer but did not want to "preempt" Ms Arroyo's announcement.

Dayrit also said it was "just a coincidence" that his resignation occurred shortly after those of Haydee Yorac (as chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government) and of Victor Corpus (as alternate ex-officio chair of the Natural Resources Development Corp.).

At one point, he told reporters to stop asking him "all of those provocative questions."

Changes

Dayrit admitted that as early as August 2003, the President had phoned him to say that she wanted "changes" in her Cabinet.

"She said she wanted these changes done smoothly and with proper attention to the detail that was needed," he said.

Asked if he would have tendered his resignation had Ms Arroyo not phoned him, Dayrit replied in Filipino: "I wanted to go, anyway. I've been in the job for four years."

He added: "You know, they call it a cliché, [but] you serve at the pleasure of the President. So, anytime, the President can ask you to go. For me, that's just the way it is in a Cabinet post."

Vision for the team

Dayrit said that the President had given him a free hand to run the Department of Health, and that the two of them never clashed during his watch.

Nevertheless, he noted, she spoke of a "vision" for a new Cabinet that she would form after the presidential election in May 2004.

Dayrit used basketball as a metaphor to explain his point: "The owner has a vision for the team. Even if you're a good player, as long as the owner wants to change the way he runs his team, he can always trade you.

"The President [had] a vision for the eventual Cabinet that she would want to have. Because she [had] a new term, I think she was looking at facing different issues during her term."

But Dayrit said Ms Arroyo told him during their August 2003 conversation that she was not in a hurry to effect changes at the DOH.

"In your case, I'd like you to complete the work, [to tie] up the loose ends," he quoted the President as telling him.

"[In] the course of the next few months, we decided that May was the best time to leave," he said.

Time to go

Last April 12, Dayrit submitted a letter dated seven days earlier, telling the President: "It is time for me to resign my post as health secretary and transfer leadership ... to whoever you choose to be my successor."

He said there was no need for Ms Arroyo to ask him to reconsider his decision because "as far as [he] was concerned, this was the time to go."

In the letter, Dayrit requested that his resignation take effect on May 31 so he could attend the May 16-22 World Health Assembly as the Philippines' outgoing health secretary.

He said he needed to attend the assembly owing to his being one of the 17 commissioners of the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health.

"I leave government service with only good memories and feelings of my work as a civil servant and Cabinet secretary. I leave without rancor or feelings of discord," he said in a statement yesterday.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PNP hurting from authority of local gov'ts

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE POWER of local chief executives over cops is preventing the police organization to effectively perform its functions, according to a study funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

"The authority being exercised by local governments units over the internal operations and decision-making of the PNP (Philippine National Police) creates an environment extremely vulnerable to undue politicization of the police force," it says.

The report, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, says such condition "destroys the command responsibility and administrative management authority of the PNP."

Titled "Transforming the PNP to a More Capable, Effective and Credible Police Force," the study was conducted to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the country's police force.

External agencies

The UNDP study strongly suggests that the authority of "external agencies," like local governments, the Interior Department and even the National Police Commission (Napolcom), be removed over the administration and management of the PNP internal operations.

Instead of exercising administrative supervision over the police, the Napolcom can provide "independent external review or audit of the PNP's operations and performance," and act as advisor to the President on the country's peace and order problems, the study says.

The study adds that police chiefs should be conferred with "all final administrative authority and accountability over the internal operations of the PNP."

Supporters of the move to withdraw the deputation of local executives of Abra province would find an affirmation in this report.

Under the devolution concept of the local government code, the mayor or governor wields supervisory powers over the police. They recommend the provincial, city or town police chief.

The report says that far from helping the government in its peace and order campaign, the law that defines the current relationship of the police and local governments has "undermined basic organizational principles and fundamentals that are preconditions for the effectiveness of any organization" like the PNP.

The study recommends a total overhaul of the police, saying that transforming the PNP into a "truly professional and capable workforce hinges on reforming the entire institutional framework of the country's police system, which provided the context of many of the current weaknesses of the police."

Politicized

The study puts into words what many police officers could only say in private—that the selection of officers to certain posts has become highly politicized, leaving qualified officers out of the selection process simply because they are not close to politicians.

"Anecdotal information gathered reveal that PNP recommendees to certain uniformed positions may not finally be hired and appointed unless they get the nod of the local executives of specific loyalties where they are to be assigned," the study says.

"Other anecdotal stories on the use of policemen as personal bodyguards of local executives abound," it adds.

Public works men prefer to go north

THEY'D rather head north.

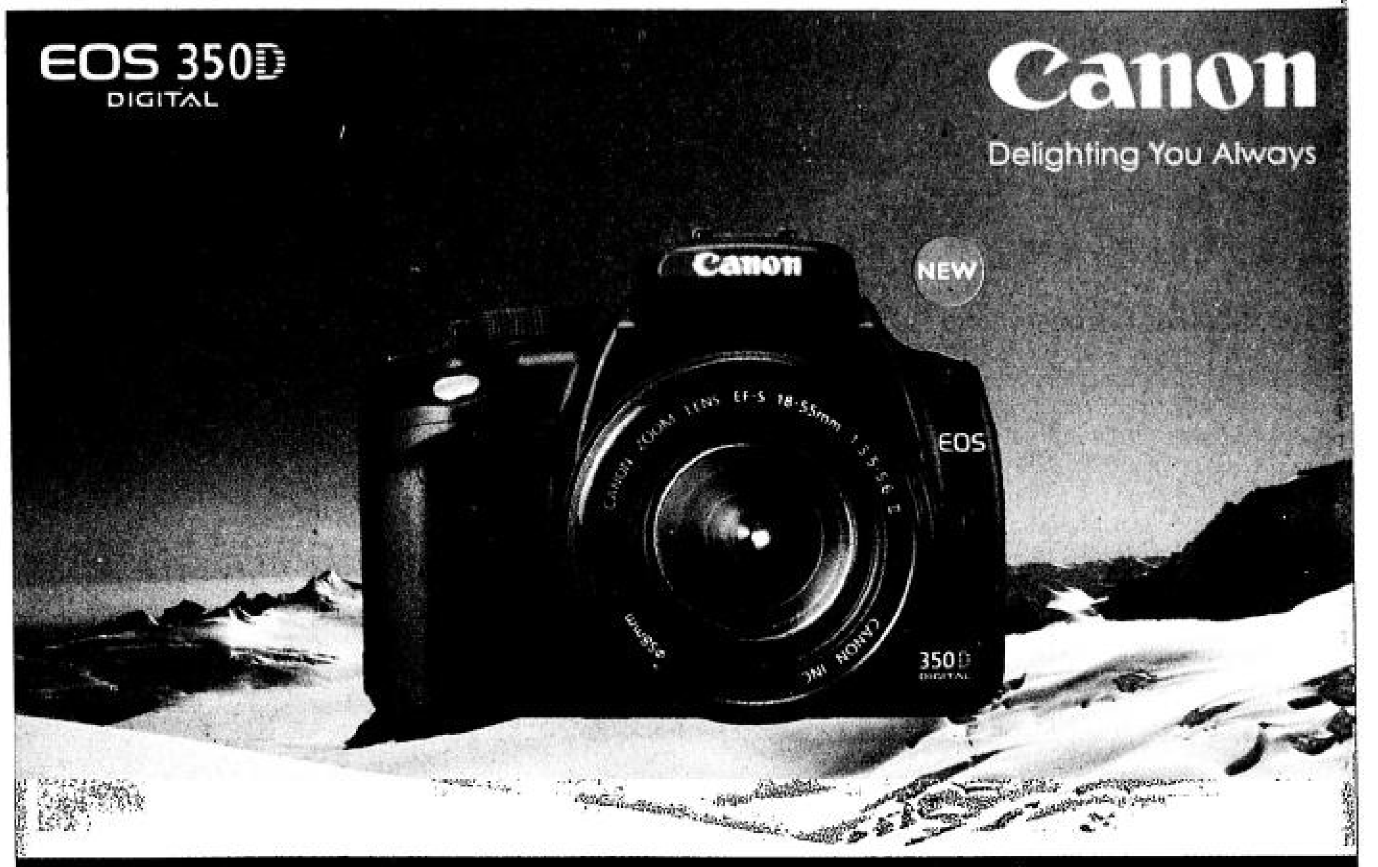
Instead of moving to Bicol, the Department of Public Works and Highways will push for the transfer of its Manila central office to Clark Field in Pampanga.

DPWH Undersecretary Salvador Pleyto said the move to Clark would be more advantageous.

"We made a proposal about it earlier, but it did not reach Malacañang. [We] will meet about it again and then formally make the proposal to transfer to Clark instead," Pleyto told reporters yesterday.

Pleyto heads a newly created task force that would oversee the transfer of the DPWH main office as well as some of its regional and district offices to various parts of the country.

The transfers are part of President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive to relocate government agencies outside Metro Manila to bring them closer to the people and decongest the metropolis. *Leila B. Salaverria*



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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

100 al-Qaida militants killed in US offensive

BAGHDAD—Hundreds of American troops backed by helicopter gunships and warplanes swept into remote desert villages near the Syrian border, hunting for followers of Iraq's most wanted terrorist and reportedly killing as many as 100 militants since the weekend operation began.

The US military on Monday said some foreign fighters were believed among the insurgents killed in the first 48 hours of the assault, which began late Saturday in the border town of Qaim, about 320 km west of Baghdad. At least three Marines were killed in the region, it said.

US officials described the area as a known smuggling route and a haven for foreign fighters involved in Iraq's insurgency. The assault was the biggest US offensives since the insurgent stronghold of Falluja fell last fall.

The offensive was being conducted by Regimental Combat Team 2, a joint force of about 1,000 Marines, sailors and soldiers commanded by the 2nd Marine Division, and expected to last several days in an area along the Euphrates River in the al-Jazirah Desert, said Capt. Jeffrey Pool, a Marine spokesperson.

A senior military official in Washington said the offensive was targeting followers of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of Al-Qaida in Iraq, who are believed operating in the remote region.

"This is an area which we believe has been pretty heavy with foreign insurgents from many different areas—Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Palestine," said Lt. Col. Steven Boylan, a spokesperson for US forces in Iraq. "That's a fairly porous area of the border because of the terrain. It is very difficult."

Acting on information from a captured al-Zarqawi associate, US forces moved into Qaim overnight Saturday, killing six insurgents and detaining 54 suspects, the military said in a statement. Local residents were providing a "wealth of information," about the insurgency and foreign fighters in their area, Pool said.

On Sunday, troops moved into villages in and around Obeidi, a town about 300 km west of Baghdad, and started to push north across the Euphrates, according to The Chicago Tribune, which has a reporter embedded with the combat team.

"Our analysis is that there's a foreign fighter flow from Syria," Col. Stephen Davis, commander of Regimental Combat Team 2, told the Tribune. "The trademark of these folks is to be where we're not. We haven't got north of the river for a while."

The newspaper quoted some Marines as saying residents of one riverside town turned off all their lights at night, apparently to warn neighboring villages of the approaching US forces. *AP*

Japanese abducted in Iraq

SAITO

TOKYO—An Islamic militant group said it was holding a badly wounded Japanese man after an ambush near a US base in Iraq, but Japan's government said on Tuesday the incident would not affect its troop deployment in the country.

The group, called Army of Ansar al-Sunna, posted a picture on its website of a Japanese passport bearing the name Akihiko Saito and an identification card saying he was a security manager.

Japan's Foreign Ministry said a British security company that employs Saito, 44, as a consultant had reported him missing after a convoy of vehicles was ambushed in western Iraq.

Several people appeared to have been killed in the attack, the ministry said.

Saito served in the French Foreign Legion for more than 20 years, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hatsuhisa Takashima said.

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura said no demands had been received while Defense Minister Yoshinori Ohno said the incident would not affect the work of Japan's 550 non-combat troops in southern Iraq.

"Under present circumstances, it does not affect activities of the Self-Defense Forces in Samawa. The security there is not particularly worsening," a spokesperson quoted Ohno as saying.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, a staunch ally of US President George W. Bush, has previously resisted demands by militants that Tokyo withdraw its troops from Iraq.

Koizumi returned in the afternoon from Russia, where he had attended ceremonies marking the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

The deployment—Japan's biggest overseas military operation since World War II—was unpopular. But several hostage incidents involving Japanese, including the beheading of a young backpacker, had little impact on Koizumi's support rates.

"We strongly condemn the act of violence and terrorism ... and we will make utmost efforts for obtaining his safe return," Takashima told reporters.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told a separate news conference that the Iraqi government had promised to do what it could.

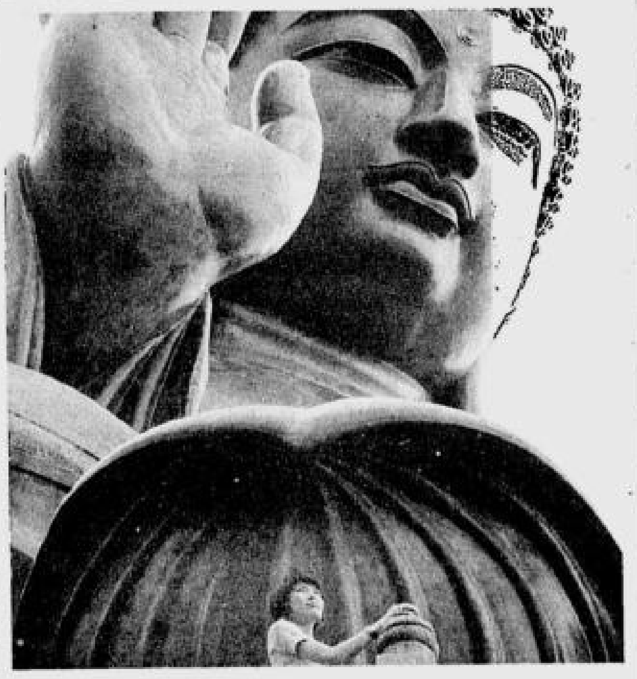
Saito had been in Iraq since December but the Japanese government had not previously been aware of that fact nor had Saito been in touch with his family for many years, he added.

The Islamic militant group said it had seized the man identified as Saito after an ambush of vehicles coming from a US base near Baghdad as the convoy approached the town of Hit in Iraq's Sunni Muslim western region.

"He has serious injuries and we will soon issue a video showing him," the group said.

The group claimed on the website to have captured 12 Iraqis and five foreigners in the ambush and to have killed all of them except Saito.

Six Japanese civilian hostages have been taken since the war began. Five were freed unharmed and one was beheaded. *Reuters*



BATHING BUDDHA

A tourist stands in front of a big Buddha perched on a hillside of the Po Lin Monastery on the outlying island of Lantau in Hong Kong. May 10 marks the "bathing of the Buddha" in preparation for Buddha's birthday on May 16. AFP

Sharon delays Gaza pullout to mid-August

JERUSALEM—Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said on Monday he would postpone Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip by three weeks, to mid-August, to avoid conflicting with a traditional Jewish period of mourning.

The delay could give settlers and rightist supporters, now staging a protest campaign, more time to organize their avowed resistance to Sharon's plan to "disengage" from conflict with Palestinians in occupied territory they want for a state.

Sharon, in an advance excerpt of a television interview aired on Israel Radio, said the Gaza pullout would be launched "in consideration of the (mourning period), that is, immediately after Tisha B'av, apparently the 15th, 16th or 17th of August."

He declined to give an exact date.

Sharon had mooted a possible delay three weeks ago, citing Jewish religious sensibilities during the mourning spell that marks the destruction during biblical times of two Jerusalem temples. The observance ends on Aug. 14.

Devout Jews do not move house during this period.

Indications that Hamas militants could dominate Gaza after Israelis leave strengthened on Monday with official results of municipal elections showing the Islamist faction trounced the Fatah party of moderate President Mahmoud Abbas in main towns.

The solid performance by Hamas, sworn to Israel's destruction but adhering to a ceasefire for now, could presage the outcome of a parliamentary election slated for July and problems for Abbas' agenda of peace talks with Israel.

US-led mediators count on the ceasefire and evacuation of all 21 settlements in Gaza and four of 120 in the West Bank to revive a "road map" peace plan envisaging Palestinian statehood.

But the truce has been shaky and many of the 8,500 Gaza settlers vow to stay put, raising the specter of violence. *Reuters*

UN assembly recalls Hitler, Stalin at ceremony

UNITED NATIONS—The United Nations commemorated victims and victors of World War Two on Monday, with speakers paying tribute to Allied sacrifices but also recalling Soviet dictator Josef Stalin's actions in eastern Europe.

The session was initiated by Russia, which also organized larger ceremonies in Moscow, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Allied victory in Europe and the subsequent founding of the United Nations. The international body was formed with a mission to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

"I wish to pay tribute to all the soldiers from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and other nations who fought in the ranks of the Red Army," said Poland's Foreign Minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld, who then recited the names of Nazi concentration camps, many of them in Poland.

But, he said, the "crimes of Stalinism are also horrific." He recalled the 1939 pact with Nazi leader Adolf Hitler that divided Poland, and Stalin's orders in 1940 to massacre several thousand Polish officers and intellectuals in the Katyn Forest.

Rotfeld also criticized the 1938 Munich Agreement, signed by Germany, Britain, France and Italy, which paved the way for the partition of Czechoslovakia and German occupation. He called it a treaty "designed to channel German aggression eastward."

After the fall of the Third Reich, Rotfeld said, "The first days of joy at the regaining of freedom gave way to 45 years of the subjugation of those states to the rule of Stalin's Soviet Union."

The Baltic nations, two of which irritated Russia by boycotting the Moscow ceremonies, were quick to make the same point. *Reuters*

AN IRAQI man rushes to the scene after a car bomb exploded in central Baghdad Tuesday. Firefighters and ambulances raced to the scene, where at least five heavily damaged vehicles were burning, including a bus. AP

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16 May	Ethical Dimensions in the Availment of Legal Remedies and Court Processes (*Legal Ethics*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	*Justice Hilarion L. Aquino*
	Update in Criminal Procedure (*Procedural Law*)	Three (3) (1:30-4:30)	*Justice Ricardo P. Galvez*
17 May	Legal Writing and Oral Advocacy	Four (4) (8:00-12:00)	*Prof. Myrna S. Feliciano*
	Pre Trial and Trial Skills	Four (4) (1:00-5:00)	*Justice Jose L. Sabio, Jr.*
18 May	Special Rules Governing Family Courts: Rules on Annulment/Nullity & Legal Separation (*MCLE Prescribed*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	*DCA Zenaida N. Elepano*
	International Commercial Arbitration	Two (2) (1:00-3:00)	*Dean Custodio O. Parlade*
	Recent Developments in Alternative Dispute Resolution (*ADR*)	Three (3) (3:15-6:15)	*Prof. Alfredo F. Tadiar*
19 May	Update in Taxation (*Substantive Law*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	*Prof. Serafin Salvador*
	International Law	Two (2) (1:00-3:00)	*Prof. Harry L. Roque*
	Update in Criminal Law (*Substantive Law*)	Three (3) (3:15-6:15)	*Justice Diosdado M. Peralta*
20 May	Civil, Criminal and Administrative Liabilities of Lawyers (*Legal Ethics*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	*Justice Nicolas P. Lapena*
	Reforms in Land Registration (*MCLE Pres.*)	Three (3) (1:30-4:30)	*Prof. Ramon N. Casanova*

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Former Jackson staff dispute molestation claims

SANTA MARIA, California—Michael Jackson employees, past and present, told jurors at his child sex trial Monday they had never seen the singer behave inappropriately with young boys at his Neverland Ranch.

Contradicting prosecution witnesses who testified to Jackson's repeated molestation of young visitors to his fantasy-themed estate, the staffers also chipped away at the charge that Jackson held the family of his accuser captive at the ranch.

Francin Contreras, who worked at Neverland in the early 1990s, branded a former maid who testified to seeing Jackson touch young boys in a sexual manner as a liar and a thief.

Insisting she had never heard the maid, Adrian McManus, say anything negative about Jackson when they had worked together, Contreras said she had cut their friendship when she realized McManus was stealing on the job.

"She had hats that belonged to Mr. Jackson ... pajamas, watches, T-shirts ... items that belonged to the ranch," Contreras said, adding that McManus would smuggle the singer's clothes out in a laundry basket under the pretext of taking them home to iron.

"There was a hat. You can't iron a hat," she said.

As a prosecution witness, McManus, who worked as Jackson's personal maid in 1992 and 1993, had told jurors she saw the pop icon kissing three young boys, and touching their rear ends or crotches.

She identified one of those boys as former child star Macaulay Culkin of "Home Alone" fame. Culkin has denied ever being abused by Jackson and figures on the list of potential witnesses.

Two other boys the prosecution says were inappropriately touched by Jackson, testified at the start of the defense case last week that they had never been molested in any way by the superstar, even though they regularly shared his bed.

Prosecutors have sought to demonstrate a pattern of past child abuse to support the charges that Jackson, 46, molested a 13-year-old boy in early 2003, plied him with alcohol and conspired to hold the boy and his family captive at Neverland.

Jackson's lawyers insist all the molestation claims are fabrications by greedy parents or former Jackson employees seeking to get rich from civil suits, books or newspaper stories.

Also testifying Monday was Violet Silva, the current "safety coordinator" at Neverland, who said she had never seen Jackson engage in any inappropriate acts with young boys.

Describing the "reckless" behavior of Jackson's accuser and his younger brother when they were staying at Neverland, Silva said they would drive wildly around the estate in golf carts, at one point crashing into a fountain.

The defense asserts that the boys were out of control and helped themselves to the alcohol and pornographic material that the prosecution insists was supplied by Jackson.

Silva indicated that anyone who felt they were being kept captive at Neverland would have had little difficulty escaping.

Neverland Ranch manager Joseph Marcus also undermined the kidnap conspiracy charge, saying he had never been given the impression that the accuser's family were being held against their will. *AFP*

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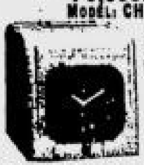

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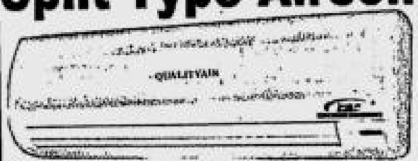

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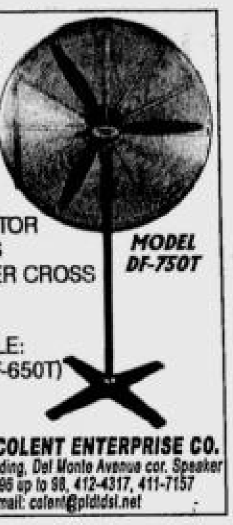

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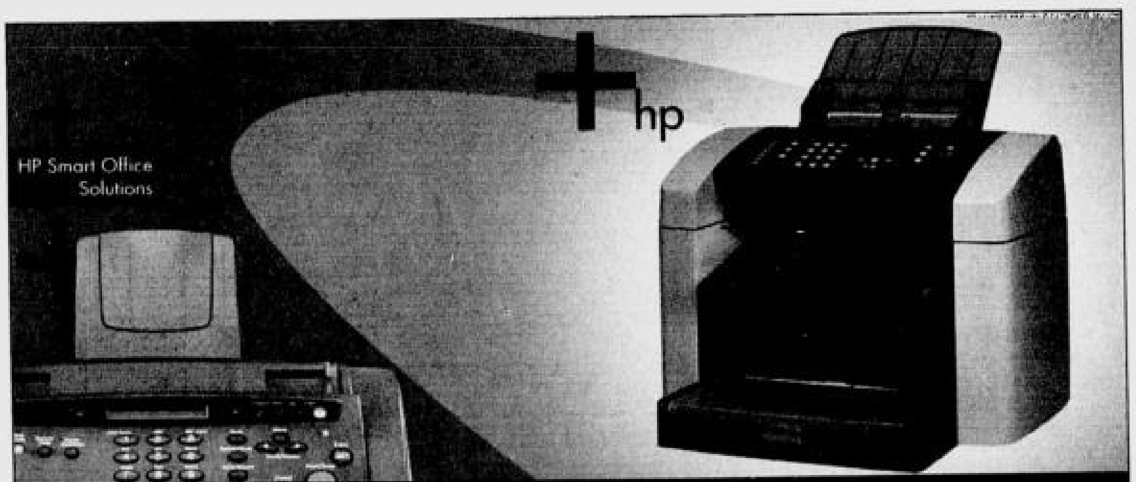

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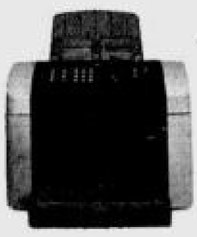

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PLEASANT SIGHT
Miss Serbia-Montenegro Jelena Mandic waves as Miss Switzerland Fiona Hefti (right) gestures as they walk in a hotel lobby in Bangkok Tuesday. Mendic and Hefti will compete in the Miss Universe 2005 pageant May 31. AFP

Blair reshapes gov't, rejects calls to resign

LONDON—British Prime Minister Tony Blair rejected calls to resign on Monday as he reshuffled the ministerial pack after last week's election greatly weakened his Labor government.

Blair won an unprecedented third consecutive term for the center-left Labor party last week, but voters whose trust in him was damaged by the war in Iraq more than halved his majority.

Britain's political debate on Monday was dominated by one question: when will he quit?

"The whole story of the government is going to be 'when is he going,'" said Labor parliamentarian Clare Short, a frequent thorn in Blair's side who resigned from the Cabinet over Iraq.

"There's a real danger the government looks divided, doesn't renew itself, we lose seats in local government elections and so on, and get weaker and weaker," she told BBC radio.

Blair announced last year he would serve a full third term of four to five years but then would not stand again—a move that risks turning him into a lame duck, analysts say. His parliamentary majority fell at Thursday's vote to 67 from 161.

Forecasts for his departure range from months to two years.

Finance minister Gordon Brown is Labor's heir-apparent.

Newspapers were full of speculation. The Sun tabloid even published a cut-out "fun resignation sweepstake."

A poll in the right-leaning Daily Telegraph indicated 46 percent of voters wanted Blair out by this time next year.

Amid the speculation, Blair announced junior ministerial appointments in what was widely seen as a balanced shake-up which brought a range of people from different wings of Labor into government.

But former Brown adviser Ed Balls, elected as a lawmaker for the first time last week, did not get a ministerial post.

Some critics want Blair to go by September, when Labor holds its annual conference. Labor parliamentarian John Austin said he would stand for the leadership at the conference with the aim of paving the way for a more serious contender.

Others say Blair should quit around the 2006 September conference, allowing him to bow out gracefully after Britain completes its presidency of the Group of Eight rich nations and the European Union this year.

But Blair shows no sign of wanting to give up: "I have not just gone through four weeks of Hell to bugger off in a few months' time," he was quoted by media as telling confidants.

Many political pundits see Britain's referendum on the EU constitution, planned for 2006, as the moment of truth.

Presuming France approves the treaty on May 29 and Britain's vote goes ahead, Blair will face a battle to convince skeptical Britons to back the project. Defeat could force him out.

But Blair loyalists expressed dismay that a man who has seen off four leaders of the main opposition Conservative party since 1997 should be hounded out of office. *Reuters*

Burma urges public to be vigilant

RANGOON—Military-ruled Burma urged public vigilance against "terrorist acts" on Tuesday as rumors swirled over who was behind a series of weekend bomb attacks and whether more people had died than state media has reported.

A news blackout after Saturday's bombings has stoked speculation that the number of victims—11 killed according to state media—was much higher.

Doubts have also surfaced about the junta's charge that ethnic guerrillas and pro-democracy exiles were behind the attacks on two upscale shopping malls and a trade center in Burma (also known as Myanmar).

"We just don't know who to blame," U Ba Tin, a 73-year-old retired government employee, said after he had heard that rebel groups had accused the junta of orchestrating the blasts.

"I really feel bad and disappointed with our situation."

The city was slowly returning to normal on Tuesday, with most shopping malls re-opening. But many people were still afraid to venture into public places after rumors of unexploded bombs spread through the capital on Monday.

"We can't stop shopping or using public transport, but when parents go out, the kids are left at home," said Ba Tin said.

The New Light of Myanmar newspaper, a government mouthpiece, again denounced Saturday's "terrorist acts" in an editorial on Tuesday, and urged citizens to guard against "destructive elements within and without, with the intention of encroaching upon the sovereignty of the Union."

But the junta, which censors newspapers and radio and blocks Internet sites that might carry news on events inside and outside the country, has released no new details of the incident. *Reuters*

Iran to resume nuclear fuel enrichment program

TEHRAN—Iran said on Monday it would resume uranium enrichment-related activities within days, a move the United States and the European Union have warned would see its nuclear case escalated to the UN Security Council.

"We will lift the first stage of our suspension, which is that of our UCF (Uranium Conversion Facility) project in Isfahan, in the next few days," Mohammad Saeedi, deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, told a university conference, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The Isfahan plant is used to convert raw uranium into a gas that can be fed into enrichment centrifuges for purification into fuel that can be used in nuclear power reactors or, if purified further, into bomb-grade material.

Iran strongly denies US accusations it is trying to build atomic weapons and says its nuclear facilities will only be used as part of a civilian energy program.

Iran suspended nuclear fuel production in November as a trust-building measure while it tried to negotiate an agreement on the future of its nuclear activities with Britain, France and Germany who are leading the talks on behalf of the EU. *Reuters*

Germany prepares to dedicate new Holocaust memorial

BERLIN—After years of debate and delay, Germany is finally dedicating its national Holocaust memorial, an undulating field of concrete slabs on a site resonant with both the terror of German history and the vibrancy of today's reunited Berlin.

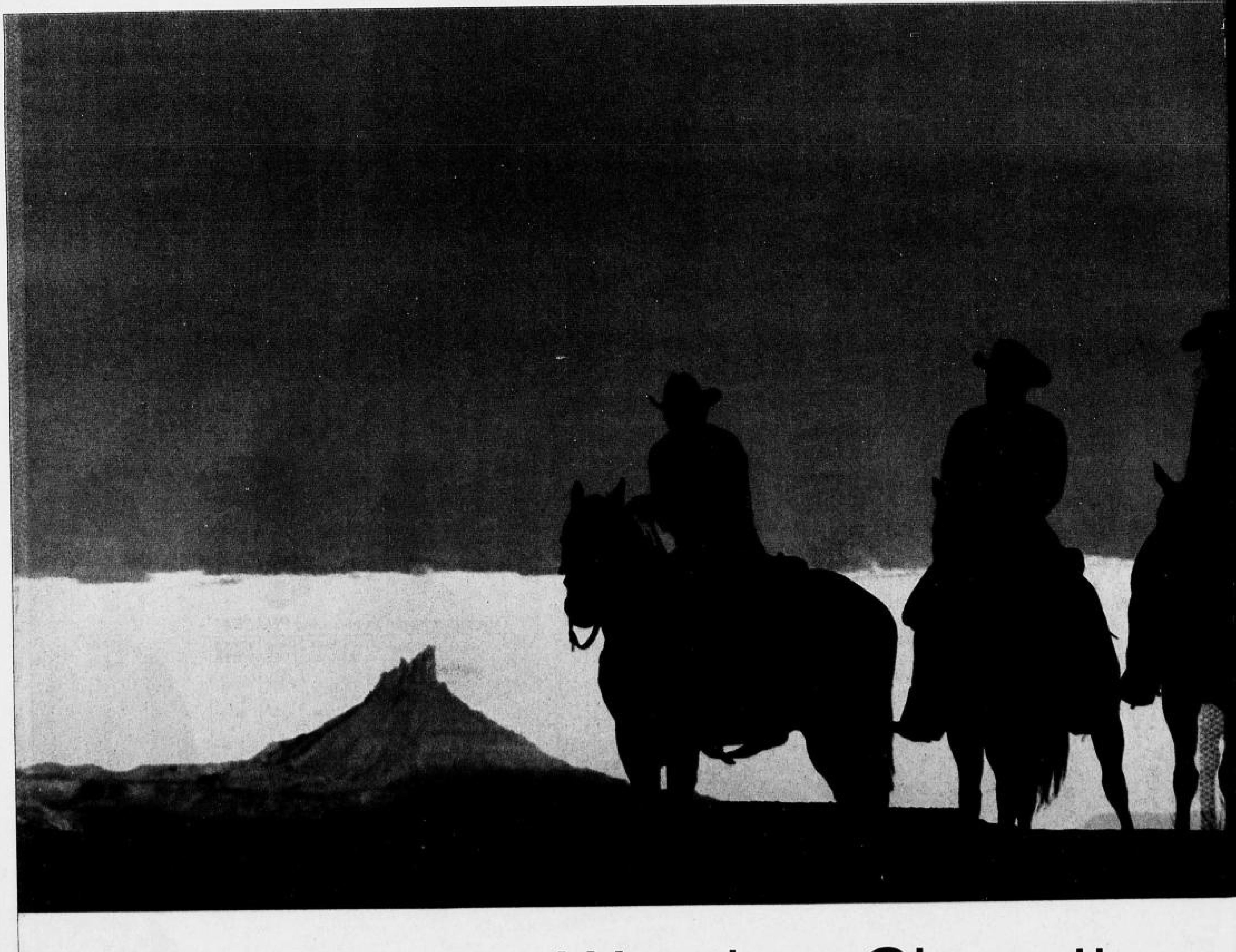
Parliament President Wolfgang Thierse will join Jewish leaders for the opening ceremony Tuesday at the sprawling monument near the landmark Brandenburg Gate in the center of the city.

The completed field already draws sightseers, kept out by a metal construction fence which will come down Thursday, when the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe opens to the public.

People will then be able to walk into the field from any point, wandering among the tilting slabs and uneven ground intended to recall the disorientation of the Holocaust's victims. There's no statue, plaque, inscription or familiar symbol to tell people what to think or feel.

"I want it to be a part of ordinary, daily life," its designer, New York architect Peter Eisenman, told journalists Monday. "People who have walked by say it's very unassuming... I like to think that people will use it for shortcuts, as an everyday experience, not as a holy place."

The field is near the site of Adolf Hitler's bunker, and for 28 years lay in the no man's land of the Berlin Wall built by communist authorities in East Berlin to keep people from leaving during the Cold War. *AP*


Government Warning: Cigarette sm

Lebanon's election campaign heats up

BEIRUT—Lebanon's most prominent anti-Syrian leader, Michel Aoun, wooed the Shiite Muslim guerrilla group Hezbollah and opposition factions, trying to build alliances as the campaign for crucial parliament elections in the coming weeks gathered steam.

Also Monday, Saad Hariri, a son of the slain former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, entered the election fray, saying he will formally launch the battle for Beirut's leadership Tuesday by announcing a list of names of candidates for the capital's 19 parliamentary seats.

The vote, due to begin May 29 and be held in several stages, is the first held since Syria's recent military withdrawal—and the opposition is hoping to seize control of parliament and break the hold of Syria's allies on power.

Maneuvering is intense among the many factions of the opposition—particularly after the return of Aoun on Saturday from a 14-year exile in France.

The Christian former army commander met with politicians from all sectarian communities, seeking alliances. He met Monday with a delegation from the militant Hezbollah group led by legislator Ali Ammar, who hinted afterward at the possibility of a coalition.

"We were and are still extending our hands to cooperate with all sectors of the society," Ammar told reporters after a closed meeting with Aoun at his residence in Rabieh, north of Beirut.

"General Aoun wants to enter politics through the language of programs and planning. We agree with him on this and we call on all forces to adopt this language," Ammar said.

Aoun and Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah will meet soon, he said without giving a date.

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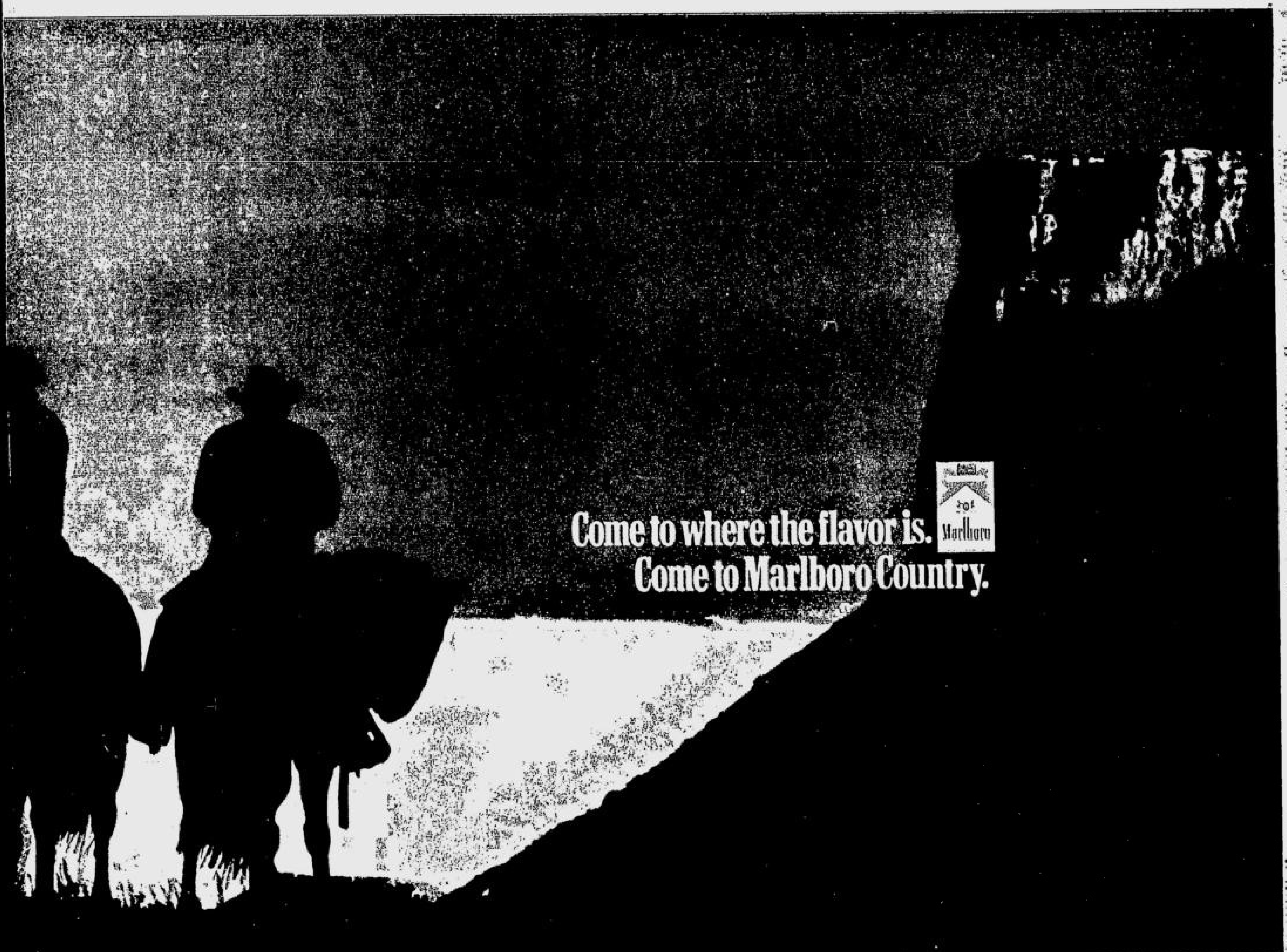

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Too much

EDITORIAL

EVEN as Congress is poised to give the President authority to raise the value-added tax to 12 percent from the present 10 by 2006, the bicameral conference committee wants the VAT exemptions on oil, power, local shipping and airlines lifted. This means consumers will be paying more for electricity, while companies will find the cost of transporting goods going up. The committee says this isn't going to happen since franchise and excise taxes for the power and petroleum sectors will be reduced, but given an inch, companies time and again take a mile at the expense of the consumers. So prices are more likely than not to go up all around.

However, it isn't in power or fuel that the public will feel the pinch initially. The first part of tougher times will be experienced by the commuting public. The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board has approved an increase of P2 in the minimum fare for jeepneys in most of Luzon, and an additional 50 centavos for non-airconditioned buses, starting later this month. The "mega-taxis," which have become increasingly popular with commuters, will also get a fare increase, according to the LTFRB. And by next month students can avail themselves of the 20-percent fare discount only during class days.

The transport sector sought the increase and got it. Perhaps it's not as much as the transport unions would have wanted. The fare increase the LTFRB granted is lower than the P2.50 originally sought by jeepney operators and the P3 demanded by bus owners. But still the amounts are a lot closer to the sector's demands than, say, the wage increases recently announced by President Macapagal-Arroyo. That's why a hue and cry against the fare increase has erupted.

Even militant groups are against the fare increase, although transport workers are among their most loyal and best-organized allies. Kilusang Mayo Uno Rep. Crispin Beltran said before Labor Day that a fare hike was necessary, but only after the minimum wage was raised. To do otherwise would be an unfair imposition on the public, he said. Beltran has denounced the fare increase. Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño has said pretty much the same thing: a fare hike is objectionable when unaccompanied by a wage hike.

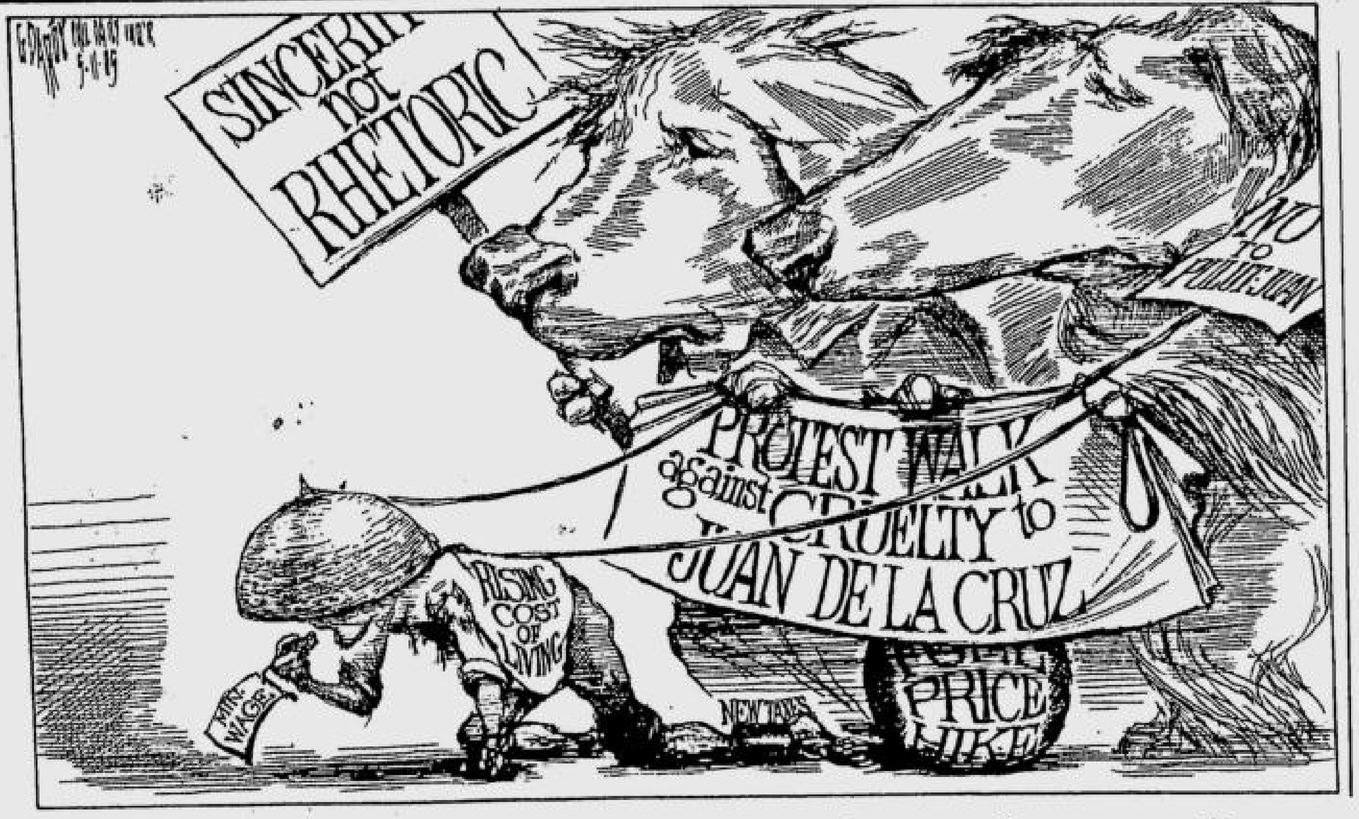
The move of the LTFRB has also been criticized by sectors within the government. A study made by the technical working group of the Development Budget Coordination Committee says that a resulting wage increase "given the petitioned fare increase" would raise inflation by one percentage point. Raising the rate of inflation could erode any benefits coming from a wage increase. In other words, if the government gave the full rate increase demanded by the transport sector, the consequence would be higher inflation, and the canceling out of any benefits that might come from an increase in the minimum wage.

The LTFRB didn't raise fares by the total amount demanded by the transport sector, but it raised it beyond the amount thought optimal by government economic planners. Socio-economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri has said that a reasonable fare increase based on fuel price hikes should only be between 5 and 8 centavos for each kilometer plus 22 centavos per kilometer due to the higher cost of spare parts. "Thus, total fare hike should not exceed P0.30 per kilometer or P1.20 for the first four kilometers," he said. Neri suggested that if the fare hike could be managed prudently, wage increases might be tempered.

None of this has come to pass. It's a sign of the dysfunctional nature of this administration that something with profound economic consequences could be decreed without taking into account the analysis made by its own economic experts. Or was the decision made in defiant disregard of Neri's desire for prudence? Or even in disregard of reality?

The LTFRB raised fares based on a diesel price of P29 per liter. But is that the price of diesel in the gas stations? Diesel in Metro Manila costs P27.25 when sold to private motorists but only P26.25 to public utility vehicles. What was the LTFRB thinking?

Explanations are in order. Did the administration cave in, yet again, to those who could shout the loudest, regardless of the general welfare? There might be poetic justice in the outrage to come, aimed at a government unleashing a deluge in the form of higher prices. But alas, the unkindest cut of all, will be the public bearing the brunt of the government's own confused policies.



Media groups condemn murders of journalists

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I THOUGHT the "Dog Walk for a Cause" on Roxas Boulevard last Sunday was to inculcate respect for dogs, or mongrels, the so-called "*askals*" (for "*asong kalye*"). It turns out the real purpose was for a silly objective: to break into the Guinness Book of World Records for the biggest number of dogs in a dog walk. More on this later.

I don't know why we have to break another record in the Guinness Book when the Philippines is already well known in the world for other reason: being the most corrupt nation in the world, having the slowest judicial system, and being the most murderous country in the world for journalists.

We are ahead even of Iraq in the number of journalists killed—and there is a war there. Most of the journalists killed there were caught in the crossfire, but those killed in the Philippines were murdered.

Angered and concerned by the continuing murders of their colleagues (24 dead in the last three years; 67 since 1986), leaders and members of different print and broadcast organizations were called to a meeting last Monday by Samahang Plaridel to draft a manifesto condemning the murders and the helplessness of the Philippine National Police to prevent them or catch, prosecute and jail the murderers, and the seeming indifference of the Arroyo administration to the shocking situation. Here is the statement made on short notice:

"We, the presidents/chairmen of (media associations) speak as one on a grave and common danger to our struggling democracy.

"Free and independent journalists are facing virtual extinction through the final form of censorship: murder.

"The unabated slaying of journalists, which has caught the attention of the international press community, poses a serious danger to what Alexis de Tocqueville characterized as the chief instrument of freedom.

"As such the danger to a free press is a danger to society itself.

"Servitude cannot be complete if the press is free. A servile press is the clear message of censorship by death.

"Our country has once experienced how it was to be denied the right to criticize and dissent. With the unprecedented number of journalists killed, everyone is deprived of the right to free thought, speech and expression.

"As Thomas Jefferson truly said, 'Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.'

"As journalists, we are not so naïve as to claim, or demand, absolute immunity from the risks of pursuing our professions in a society marred by corruption and violence. But freedom of the press is guaranteed by our Constitution and our laws as essential to the life of a democratic nation. For this reason, journalists need the protection of the free institutions that they serve.

"Only in this way can the freedom of all be guaranteed.

"In times of social oppression, the superior virtue is not to be free but to fight for freedom. This is the daily round of the press.

"We are not unaware of the weaknesses of our community. Albert Camus observed that nations are not sure of going toward justice and peace with freedom of the press. But without freedom of the press, they are sure of not getting there.

"It is facetious of officials to urge non-governmental organizations, which need protection themselves, to protect journalists from undue harm.

"We will do our job of reporting and commenting on the news as fairly, as impartially and as fearlessly as we can. Let the government do its job of defending the Constitution, executing the laws, and protecting the lives and properties of citizens.

"We have our respective obligations to society. We have our assigned missions."

The journalists at the meeting had the harshest words for the ineptitude of the PNP in finding the killers and their masterminds, and the lack of concern of the administration.

Besides Samahang Plaridel, leaders of 14 other media organizations have so far signed the manifesto, among them the following: Philippine Press Institute, National Press Club, Kapisanan ng Mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas, Manila Overseas Press Club, National Union of Journalists, Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, Malacañang Press Corps and Defense Press Corps.

The INQUIRER earlier published two editorials on the same subject. Is the government listening?

* * *

Back to the dog walk. As I said earlier, many of those who participated were given the impression that the purpose was to gain respect for our own Pinoy dogs which are usually neglected, subjected to cruelty, and killed and butchered for *pulutan*. It turned out they were invited only to add their numbers to the pure breeds.

But what did you expect? The dog walk was organized by the Philippine Canine Club whose members are pure breeds. The mongrels were only used to try to break the Guinness Book record.

Other pet associations, however, proudly brought their mongrels. The contingent of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (Paws) had placards condemning the eating of dogs. The contingent of Cara had placards saying, "Proud to be Pinoy." They refused to call their mongrels "*askals*." They insisted on calling them "Pinoy dogs," which they are.

By the way, Mayor Lito Atienza's beautiful Bay Walk was left with a lot of scattered dog manure, dropped there mostly by the pure breeds. Paws provided its participants with newspapers and told them to clean up after their dogs. The owners of the expensive pure breeds did not.

Alternatives

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT'S not the easiest thing in the world to run a media outfit in the province, least of all a publication. Making a profit off it, tidy or not, is almost out of the question. Many publications are produced largely for political reasons. If they make money at all, they do so not from sales or from ads but from private patronage.

Which is why you are absolutely grateful when you see the exception, the one that maintains a fierce degree of independence, and a reasonable level of quality, however straitened its circumstances. Such a one is the Bicol Mail, published in Naga City by my friend Nilo Aureus. The Bicol Mail was an institution in Naga, and in Bicol generally, before martial law. It was one of the earliest publications there, and helped mightily earn for Bicol its reputation as having one of the freest presses in the country.

The Bicol Mail was shut down by the martial law government for representing, along with national newspapers like the (old) Manila Times and Chronicle, another thorn on its side. Nilo resurrected it only a couple of years ago, knowing it would be an uphill climb. The reason for it was that he did not want it to be beholden to anyone, least of all the politicians. And so from the start, he adhered to a policy of not accepting donations and notices from them. He accepted only legitimate ads, where they were forthcoming, while maintaining a competent staff at reasonable rates. The publication is weekly.

People have been wondering how long he will last. I asked him so myself. I said it must be costing him a pretty penny, using good-quality paper and full color in his front- and back-page photographs. He conceded it was a drain on his pocket. What kept him afloat, he said, were two things. One was a printing press, which the Aureuses owned, and which gave him a fairly long leash. The other was pride: He would not let a family legacy go to waste, or disappear in obscurity. It's a legacy he means to pass on to his own children. "I get rich," he says with the wry smile of a visionary, or one for whom money is just a means to an end, "I'll make it even better."

Everyone says it's done the community a world of good over the last couple of years. But everyone despairs of it as well as another one of those blessings that tend to be fleeting. Good things, people shake their heads with tired wisdom, have a way of having a short shelf life.

That is the part that astounds me. It's like the elections, when we hang our heads sorrowfully and say some candidates will win or lose whether we like it or not. Why so when we hold the power for them to win or lose in our hands with the vote? (Of course, that is a power the Comelec keeps robbing us of, but that is another story.) The fate of publications, no less than the fate of candidates, does not lie outside of us, it lies within us. We do not patronize publications, they die, in the same way that we do not vote for candidates, they lose. We buy publications, they live, in the same way that we vote for candidates, they win.

My own instinct is to wonder why, if a publication like Bicol Mail is a universally acknowledged grace (except of course by the charlatans it attacks), the various institutions of society—the Church, the schools, the NGOs, the civic organizations—and the public itself do not give all the frenzied support they can muster. It gets more circulation, it gets more ads. It gets more ads, it gets more life.

The situation of Bicol Mail raises entire questions about public responsibility, or duty, or initiative. It is a problem, of course, that applies to a wide range of things in this country. The same is true of local movies. For a long time, Filipinos have been complaining about the horrendous decline of the quality of local movies, as exemplified in particular by the so-called *pito-pito* movies, or movies done in seven days and seven nights with all the flaws of Creation and none of its wonders. Yet the same people do not naturally troop to the movie houses to watch the movies of the more serious directors, allowing them to die like seeds thrown on barren ground, or waste away like pearls cast before swine. You don't support the good movies, you'll allow the bad ones to fester.

The same is true of elections. During the last one, Filipinos were complaining about the choice between an incumbent who had shown only a predilection for money and power and had raised the ante on unscrupulousness and unethical behavior and another movie star who was in cahoots with the people of the discredited, and overthrown, former president. Yet there were other choices, not least of them Raul Roco, who had just turned the Department of Education from one of the most corrupt offices during Erap's time to one of the most efficient afterward. People just wagged their heads and said he had no chance. Well, you spurn the right choice, you make the wrong one triumph.

The same is true of the current political situation. We do not lack for initiatives like Nandy Pacheco's Kapatiran, which openly excoriates *trapo* politics, as typified by the pork barrel, and seeks to restore decency in public office. Yet we wag our heads with tired wisdom and look at people who do these things, undeterred by criticism and the havoc their crusades do to their personal fortunes, as at best being quixotic and at worst being batty.

The alternatives have always been there. We just think it's other people's business to make them work, not ours. In fact, in this country the real question has never been, "What's the alternative?" which is the one question we keep hearing these days. The real question has always been:

"Why the hell don't we support it?"

RP scores on governance go down

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE PHILIPPINES is bracketed with a group of mostly developing countries which have experienced large changes in governance scores during the past eight years from 1996 to 2004. A World Bank study released on Monday shows that the quality of governance in the Philippines has deteriorated from 1996 to 2004.

The study, titled "Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004," said the scores of the Philippines on all six dimensions of governance had dropped. The indicators were voice and accountability, political instability and violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption.

Scores for each of the six dimensions ranged from 2.5 to -2.5, with a mean score of zero. Higher scores indicate better outcomes and better quality of governance.

On the dimension of voice and accountability, which measures a country's level of political and human and civil rights, the Philippines' scores dipped to 0.02 in 2004 from 0.17 in 1996.

On political stability and violence, the study shows that the Philippines was among 21 countries that experienced a large change in scores, putting it in the category of countries like Zimbabwe, Uzbekistan, Albania, Haiti and the Ivory Coast. The Philippines' score dropped to -1.01 in 2004 from -0.12 in 1996.

On government effectiveness, the Philippines' score dropped to -0.23 in 2004, from 0.19 in 1996. This indicator measures the competence of the bureaucracy and the quality of public service delivery.

The country's score on regulatory quality dipped to -0.06 in 2004, from 0.45 in 1996. Its score on the rule of law dropped to -0.62 in 2004, from -0.11. The score on control of corruption, the indicator measuring the exercise of public power for private gain, dropped to -0.85 in 2004, from -0.40 in 1996. The study covers 209 countries. The indicators capture six key dimensions of institutional quality or governance: 1) voice and accountability measures political, civil and human rights; 2) political instability and violence measures the likelihood of violent threats to, or changes in, government, including terrorism; 3) government effectiveness measures the competence of the bureaucracy and the quality of public service delivery; 4) regulatory burden measures the incidence of market-unfriendly policies; 5) rule of law measures the quality of contract enforcement, the police and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence; 6) control of corruption measures the exercise of public power for private gain, including both petty and grand corruption and state capture.

Seen from another perspective, these dimensions define a strong or a weak state and its capacity to obtain compliance with its policies, decisions and goals.

These dimensions and the scores on quality of governance have important policy implications. The administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, which is fascinated with the slogan of a "strong republic," may well use the WB criteria to measure its performance as an effective state.

According to the study, "reformers in governments as well as civil society and investors increasingly view governance as key for development and the investment climate, which in turn has increased the demand for monitoring the quality of governance in a country overtime.

"Further, aid donors have also come to the view that aid flows have a stronger impact on development in countries with good institutional quality."

For example, the study points out that the International Development Association (the highly concessional loan window of the World Bank) as well as the US government's Millennium Challenge Account both "explicitly tie aid transfers to governance outcomes, relying on a variety of different indicators."

"There is by now a strong consensus among both academics and policymakers that good governance provides the fundamental basis for economic development," says the paper. "Academic research has focused on the effects of institutional quality on growth in the very long run, noting that there is a strong causal impact of institutional quality on per capita incomes worldwide." It demonstrates a "development dividend" from good governance. Its studies and estimates suggest that "a realistic one-standard-deviation improvement in governance would raise incomes in the long run by about two- to three-fold."

The study points out that "such an improvement in governance by one standard deviation is feasible and realistic, since it is only a fraction of the difference between the worst and best performers, and would correspond, for instance, to an improvement in the current ratings of Voice and Accountability between the level of Myanmar to that of Kazakhstan, or from the level of Kazakhstan to that of Georgia, or from the level of Georgia to that of Botswana."

The study says, "For improvements in Rule of Law, a one standard deviation difference would for instance constitute the improvement from the level of Somalia to those of Laos, or from Laos to Lebanon, or from that of Lebanon to Italy, or from Italy to Canada, while for Control of Corruption it is the improvement from the levels of Equatorial Guinea to those of Cuba, Honduras or Uganda, from those of Uganda to those of Lithuania or Mauritius, or from those of Mauritius to those of Portugal, or from those of Portugal to the stellar standards of Finland, Iceland or New Zealand."

"Even over much shorter periods such as the past 10 years," the study points out, "countries with better institutional quality have grown faster. Of course, there is variation around these relationships, since governance is not the only factor that matters for development—but it certainly is a very important factor deserving policymakers' attention."

Who should pay?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE TRANSFER of ownership of Pacific Plans Inc. was marked not just by a flurry of paper work that must have kept a battery of lawyers working 24/7 for months, but also by the actual physical transfer of its offices. At one point, the PPI offices were relocated to a small obscure building on Kamagong Street in Makati, "exiled" from the heart of the Great Pacific Life corporate headquarters in Binondo. The "new" PPI could count on a skeleton staff of only five employees expected to service around 34,000 "open-ended" educational plan holders. Plan holders wanting to avail themselves of their benefits were forced to line up outside the building under the hot sun and wait for hours before they could be attended to.

It was here, says lawyer Lito Dizon, that the Parents Enabling Parents Coalition Inc. was born. The coalition's first president, Winnie Bonifacio, "was so incensed at the treatment they were getting that she talked with other plan holders waiting in line and they decided to organize themselves then and there."

Today, PEPCI is a registered organization leading the fight to protect the interests not just of the 34,000 holders of open-ended or traditional educational plans issued by PPI, but of all Pacific plan holders as well as of the general public.

While Bonifacio, a cancer survivor, has taken a less prominent role in PEPCI, other plan holders have stepped up to the plate. The group is now headed by lawyer Philip Piccio, who in a phone conversation exclaimed, "I've had it with large and giant corporations" getting caught in financial straits, if not outright fraud, and getting away with their actions.

"Filipinos are generally passive, and even when they're victimized, they're willing to wait for government to take action. But has anyone ever gone to jail?" Piccio wants to know. "It's time for the people to stand up and demand action from our government—from our regulators and from our courts!"

* * *

IT'S easy for the ordinary wage-earner, such as this columnist, who invested in a "problematic" education plan such as that of Pacific and of CAP, to feel like such a fool, having fallen for the reassurances of agents that the company would make good on its promises.

But over lunch with Dizon and two bankers (who requested anonymity), all of whom are holding open-ended educational plans from PEP, one's feelings are assuaged. These are, after all, men who should have known better and who would have spotted any flaw in the business plan of a pre-need firm. If, as Pacific Plans' president Ernesto Garcia has declared publicly, "there was no way Pacific Plans, or any company for that matter, could earn enough to cover those steady annual increases (in school fees)," then surely they would have recognized this early enough and bailed out before it was too late?

But there was no reason for them to doubt the validity of the plans they held or the reliability of the company that stood behind them, they said.

When word about CAP's difficulties first leaked out, did they begin to nurse doubts about their PEP plans? "Not at all," says Banker A. "We knew that the Yuchengco Group of Companies was standing behind Pacific Plans and it had a solid reputation. We were confident that it would be responsible enough in terms of the investments it made with the money of the plan holders."

* * *

A STUDY provided by PEPCI shows that even with tuition increases breaching the 10-percent cap in place when PPI started selling educational plans (the plan holders claim the average tuition hike of exclusive schools was 15 percent), there were numerous other investment instruments available at the time that were earning from 16 percent to even 20 percent per annum. In short, more than enough to cover the tuition increases.

Other pre-need firms, says PEPCI, still manage to meet their obligations, even those of traditional educational plan holders, and this is because the funds kept in trust were managed well and invested wisely.

What happened with Pacific Plans, which is now petitioning the Makati regional trial court to "bless" its rehabilitation plan which involves, among other things, converting the open-ended plans to fixed-value plans?

PEPCI claims to have found evidence of mishandling of PPI's investment funds, and accuses the corporate parent of PPI of "bad faith" when it sought to spin off PPI, with only the open-ended plans in its portfolio, to "isolate" it from the rest of the conglomerate.

* * *

"THE BOND has been broken," declares Banker B, who posits that the relationship between PPI and its plan holders was built mainly on trust and that, by its unjustifiably poor investment performance, the company can be accused of reneging on its fiduciary responsibility.

"We didn't buy just any plan," says Banker A. "We invested in the education of our children, which means we invested in their future. This was not something we would fool around with. If we invested in a 'five-six' operation and we were victimized, we would have no one to blame but ourselves. But we chose carefully and put our trust in a supposedly reliable company. Where is our protection?"

Banker B says that his decision to buy an educational plan was rooted in a personal trauma, when both he and his wife lost their jobs in the late 1980s. Shaken by the possibility that anything could endanger his family's future, Banker B decided to ensure his children's welfare. "That's why the first thing I bought when I began earning again was precisely an educational plan!"

It's scant comfort, of course, knowing that even men learned in financial matters could have been taken for a ride. But if even they have ended up victims, who will step in for humbler folk?

Drawing exercises

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

HAVING taught Rizal and Philippine history for two decades, I have gathered a bag of tricks to make the lessons both enjoyable and memorable. One exercise that never fails to elicit response is a drawing exercise: I divide the class or seminar participants in groups and ask them to draw Jose Rizal and Andres Bonifacio. I have noted that the older the participants, the louder the groan after the instructions are given. If the group is composed of teachers, not only is the audible groan the loudest, there will always be a few who complain that they cannot (will not?) draw. At this point, I suggest that those who cannot draw human figure or likeness just make out a simple stick figure, but to make sure that there are certain things, certain symbols that will be associated with the stick figure to let the viewer know whether it is Rizal or Bonifacio.

After the initial grumbling, there is a change in the air. People start to giggle and laugh as they discuss how to do the drawing. Most people would have dug into their pockets and produced the one-peso coin that has Rizal's likeness. The problem is that the image is small. Worse, he is depicted in profile. So Rizal is often drawn as he appears in the coin, the industrious ones copy out the coin on a bigger scale, while the lazy ones bring out a pencil and make a rubbing of the coin on the huge cut of manila paper distributed for this diagnostic test.

Bonifacio can be found on a bigger coin, the P10 coin, but he is also in profile and has someone else with him. On the paper money, Bonifacio sometimes shares space with Apolinario Mabini, leading some people to draw the Sublime Paralytic instead of the Great Plebeian or Supremo of the Katipunan.

When all the drawings are done, I ask these to be brought to the front and, depending on the time allotted, to explain their work to the body.

From long experience, it is common to see Rizal or Bonifacio drawn like Japanese anime characters. It is also normal to see both heroes depicted with their iconographic symbols. Rizal wears a black coat, black pants and a black bowler hat. He has a moustache and his hair is parted on the side. In his right hand, he often holds a quill, or clutches two books marked: "Noli me tangere" and "El Filibusterismo." He rarely, if ever, smiles

In contrast, Bonifacio wears a white *camisa de chino*, a red neckerchief and red pants and is often barefoot. On his head is a straw hat whose wide brim is folded on the front and kept in place with a small triangular clip with three "Ks" one on each angle of the triangle. In his hand, he would either have a bolo, a bamboo lance, or a pole on which waves the red flag with three white "Ks." If Rizal is quiet and reserved, Bonifacio is almost always angry with his mouth wide open in a silent scream. Sometimes torn *cedulas* are flying around him or at his feet.

The above are standard images we have of Rizal and Bonifacio. When you go around elementary schools, and even kindergarten schools, throughout the country during August, you will find posters and drawings by the students that are supposed to represent the National Language, so we must have a lot of drawings of Manuel Quezon but there are more depicting Rizal and Bonifacio.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this exercise: first, the quality of the drawings reveals that children draw better than adults; second, the level of understanding and knowledge of these two heroes has remained static since kindergarten.

Many adults have gone through numerous history classes and yet their understanding of history, as reflected in their drawings, remains, at best, childish or maybe we can be polite and describe it as child-like.

Because we have photographs of his execution, Rizal is the easiest to draw, but the symbols are problematic. Contrary to popular belief, he used a metal-tip wooden pen to write, not a quill which may appear correct but is historically inaccurate. While he did publish two novels, Rizal should actually be holding three books because he also wrote the seldom-read annotated version of Antonio de Morga's "Sucesos de las islas Filipinas." We would like to think we know Rizal as well as the back of our hand, yet these two examples alone show we have a lot more to learn.

Bonifacio may have used the iconographic bolo in battle, but he probably preferred a pistol. To prove that common sense is not common: Imagine Bonifacio leading his men to the disaster at Pinaglabanan (some would rather call it Pinagtalunan) in 1896. It must have been a wooded area at the time, so they should have worn clothes to blend with the background. Was it practical to go into battle wearing that gleaming white *camisa de chino* and screaming red pants? He would have been a nice target in such an outfit. Yet, that image persists.

What do you think he shouted in battle? "*Sugod mga kapatid!*" or maybe "*Kalayaan!*" How can we tell our children that Bonifacio might have shouted an unprintable cuss word that begins with "p"?

History can only form a people if they have a mature knowledge and understanding of their past. To persist in the fairy tales we were given in kindergarten dooms us to repeat history.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Cats, popes, saints

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

POOR Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Barely had he become Pope Benedict XVI when the press descended on him, describing him as a "panzerkardinal" and "God's Rottweiler"—references meant to highlight his hard-line position on doctrinal matters.

But it seems there's a softer human side to the new Pope. He loves nature, plays the piano and his favorite composers are Mozart and Beethoven. Even more importantly, God's Rottweiler loves cats (and, as I discovered with more research, animals in general).

But first the cats. The news agency Knight-Ridder had a story last month from Karl Baumgartner, a theologian, who had once accompanied the cardinal to a cemetery behind Campasanto Teutonica, a church in Rome. Baumgartner remembers the visit: "It was full of cats and when he went out, they all ran to him. They knew him and loved him. He stood there, petting some and talking to them, for quite a long time..."

(Cardinal Ratzinger must have loved Rome: it's a city that likes cats, with about 10,000 cat colonies, mostly around archaeological ruins and cemeteries. By law, these stray cats cannot be harmed and veterinarians routinely visit them to make sure they're in good health.)

Another story quotes Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, one of the Pope's associates, as saying the Pope does talk to cats every time he runs into one, "sometimes for a long time." He also says these loquacious cats end up trailing the Pope. Once 10 cats followed the Pope into the Vatican, he recalls.

According to Bertone, as the Pope walked into the Vatican with his feline disciples, one of the Swiss Guards had to intervene, saying: "Look, Your Eminence, the cats are invading the Holy See."

Witch familiars

I presume, from the Swiss Guards' reactions, that cats aren't allowed in the Vatican. With the growing number of stories about the Pope's love for cats, his housekeeper and editorial assistant finally had to come out to deny that he owned a cat.

Which probably isn't surprising, because the Catholic Church has been quite ambivalent about cats. Early Christians identified cats with pagans, but also recognized the cats were useful for pest control. Some of the early popes were known to keep cats. St. Gregory the Great was said to have owned nothing except a cat.

During the Middle Ages, cats were sometimes burned to death because they were feared as possible witch familiars, i.e., pets that witches kept and from which they drew some of their occult powers. (Filipinos have similar fears about cats, identifying them with the *aswang*.)

Again, there seemed to be ambivalence here. The powerful Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642), Louis XIII's chief minister, kept dozens of cats, even building a cattery at Versailles for his wards and leaving money to maintain the cats after his death.

But the popes seemed to keep their distance. Leo XII, pope from 1820 to 1829, had a cat named Micette, described as grayish-red with black stripes and born in the Vatican. But other than Micette, I couldn't find any other references to contemporary papal pets. In fact, when you think about it, you never see popes being photographed with pets—cats, dogs, birds, fish, whatever.

Saints

Cats do make it into Christian folklore and art. One folk tale has the Virgin Mary asking animals in the stable if they could help put the newborn Jesus to sleep. None of the animals could help, but a grey tabby kitten, itself just born, was said to have climbed into the manager and purred Jesus to sleep. The Virgin Mary rewarded the tabby kitten by allowing all tabby kittens, from that day forth, to wear the letter "M" on their foreheads.

Is there a patron saint for cats and cat lovers? Most Filipinos know of San Roque as the patron saint of dogs (you see his statues in many churches, a festering sore on one leg and a dog standing by his side with a *pan de sal* in its mouth). Apparently at age 20, this nobleman gave up his riches and decided to minister to the sick. While doing this, he became ill himself and as he lay dying, a dog from a nearby villa found him and would bring him a fresh roll of bread everyday. The dog's master, intrigued by his pet's strange behavior, eventually found St. Roche (that's San Roque) and nursed the man back to health. The dog eventually stayed on with his new master, until San Roque died in prison, falsely accused of spying.

Apparently there are two patron saints for cats and cat lovers. One is St. Agatha, an early Christian virgin-martyr. Her connection with cats isn't clear, except that she is said to appear in the form of a cat to punish women who don't stop working on her feast day. Nope, she doesn't sound too nice.

St. Gertrude of Nivelles comes through as kinder, a noblewoman who refused to marry and ended up as abbess of a convent. Again her life doesn't seem to have anything to do with cats, but she was invoked during the bubonic plague and she's sometimes depicted with rats. She's also the patron saint of gardeners.

St. Ives, the patron saint of lawyers, is often depicted with a cat or, strangely, as a cat himself. Now what does that tell us about lawyers?

There's always St. Francis of Assisi, a patron saint of all animal lovers and who once said, "All creatures are created from the same paternal heartbeat." Gender-correct language wasn't in place yet then; he was referring to God. Not surprisingly, there's a cat story for him as well: During the bubonic plague, he was saved by a cat which sprang miraculously out of his sleeve.

Companions in creation

The new Pope may share some of St. Francis' views about animals in general, and not just cats. The Humane Society of the United States and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) both expressed hopes that he would be an ally for animal welfare. Peta dashed off letters to the new Pope, congratulating him and appealing to him to speak out for animals, referring to a German press interview he gave in 2002, where he said animals were our "companions in creation."

In the same interview, he said that it was acceptable to use animals as food but expressed reservations about certain animal raising practices: "Certainly, a sort of industrial use of creatures, so that geese are fed in such a way as to produce as large a liver as possible, or hens live so packed together that they become just caricatures of birds—this degrading of living creatures to a commodity seems to me in fact to contradict the relationship of mutuality that comes across in the Bible."

Peta is known for their eye-catching campaigns, such as rallies where protesters go around with nothing (literally) but placards saying, "I'd rather go naked than wear fur." A Peta spokesperson told the US TV network NBC it wasn't recruiting the new Pope for that campaign.

In the Philippines, animal welfare groups would probably be quite happy if he'd at least speak out against dog-eating.

Trash trend in media

THERE is a trend in media that needs looking into. In print (broadsheets and tabloids) are gossip and scandal columns, together with salacious articles. On radio and TV are talk shows that pry into the private lives of public personalities, especially those in the show and entertainment business. They go to the extent of manufacturing incidents that cast doubt on the integrity and capabilities of their subjects. Quite despicable is the propensity of these articles or shows to pit one subject against another, create animosities and stage-manage quarrels that titillate readers, listeners and viewers.

A substantial sector of the public laps up these accounts and relishes them with great satisfaction, gratification, joy and malicious pleasure. Housewives hurry up with their chores to catch up with the programs; students forgo their school assignments to join their elders in listening to the latest gossip and controversy; idle folk get their daily dose of "education and gratification," ears and eyes glued to radio and TV; and the minds of the very young are exposed to these daily distortions and manipulation. Something must be done about this despicable development.

Where are the self-regulating bodies in media? Where are the civic and religious organizations that pass for guardians of our morals and principles? Where are the leaders of the Church and other evangelical groups? Where are the militants and leftists who fill the streets, denouncing corruption in government, but who ignore the trash in media that is equally insidious? Where are the owners and publishers of broadsheets and tabloids? Where are the influential people behind the radio and TV networks?

Is readership and viewership the end of it all? What are the relevant government agencies doing about the situation? Why do business establishments continue to sponsor programs that are patently offensive and insult one's self-respect? Are they only interested in promoting their products, no matter what?

How much longer can we endure this?

—APOLONIO G. RAMOS,
42 Mindanao St., Marikina City

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Justice is antidote to culture of impunity

AMNESTY International Pilipinas can't agree more with the editorial titled "Sacrifice" (PDI, 5/04/05) when it expressed exasperation with "a government whose agents, when not actively persecuting journalists, are indifferent to their fate, or show only half-hearted interest in giving them justice."

Despite the existence in the Philippines of constitutional and legal safeguards designed to protect human rights, AI is gravely concerned that a climate of impunity is very much in existence in this country to this day. From 1986 up to the present, 66 journalists have been killed. Ninety-eight percent of these cases remain unsolved.

The Philippines is known within the Asia-Pacific region for its vibrant press but, apparently, it is a very dangerous place for journalists. According to the Reporters Sans Frontieres, the Philippines, "despite having free and lively independent media, (the) killings and physical attacks on journalists, along with outdated laws...prevent a full flowering of the press."

The culture of impunity encourages more killings, not only of journalists but also of human rights activists. And this culture arises when crimes are not investigated; or, when investigations are done haphazardly; or when the suspects are not brought to fair trial or are not prosecuted effectively; or when the trial does not arrive at a verdict or conviction despite convincing evidence of the guilt of the accused; or when the victims and their families are not afforded satisfactory reparation for the anguish and harm they suffered.

To overcome the culture of impunity, it is imperative for the government to show that justice applies to all and that criminals will be prosecuted regardless of their position or influence in society.

The Amnesty International sympathizes with the family of the fallen journalists.

—JESSICA UMANOS SOTO,
executive director,
Amnesty International Pilipinas
meiorias-aip@meridiantelekoms.net

Bad omen

HISTORY does repeat itself, and President Macapagal-Arroyo herself should be the first one to be aware of this. An old picture so familiar is coming back to life. *Jueteng*.

If Erap was betrayed by his closest gambling buddies and penchant for ladies, Ms Arroyo must guard against scandals involving members of her family.

Even the dumbest of persons do get an inkling as to who are the "controlling" *jueteng* personalities, allegedly close to Malacañang, being referred to in the news and rumor mills. Though the insinuations have still to be proven—and nobody has named names—one thing very sure is—it is hurting the President's credibility and moral ascendancy.

If the President wishes to leave behind a good legacy, she must do it fast before the people march to Edsa with their clinched fists and hungry stomachs.

Her rushing to impose draconian measures like the anti-terror bills, the national ID system and e-VAT only fuels the people's distrust against her regime.

From the time Ms Arroyo assumed the presidency, her authority seems to always find itself rocked either by a crisis, controversy or coup: the May 1 uprising, also called the Malacañang siege or Edsa III; corruption in the military, which triggered the Oakwood mutiny of junior officers; the doubts about the President's victory in the last elections; terror attacks; the fiscal crisis; the killings of activists and journalists; the illegal crackdown on Muslims and Balik-Islams; the war in Mindanao; growing cases of human rights violations; escalating crime rate; and the rising prices of oil and other commodities. Not to mention the growing number of political factions—though of opposing political persuasions—uniting against the Arroyo administration.

If the people continue to suffer poverty, sooner or later, this administration will no longer be able contain the people's anger. If the President is afraid of the destabilization attempts, she must not forget that history has always its own way of fooling the power-that-be in Malacañang. If the *jueteng* issue looms bigger and larger in the following months, and fingers and tongues get to be directed at the First Family, then the President should prepare her resignation speech, or she can wait for the angry mob to gather in front of Mendiola and Edsa. Erap will only be very glad to have company—in jail.

Stanley Ho's visit was the first bad omen.

—JONATHAN SO,
Kalipunan Ng Mga Katutubong Mamamayan Ng Pilipinas (KAMP), 48A Mapagbigay St., Pinyahan Dist., Diliman 1128 Quezon City

Crying shame

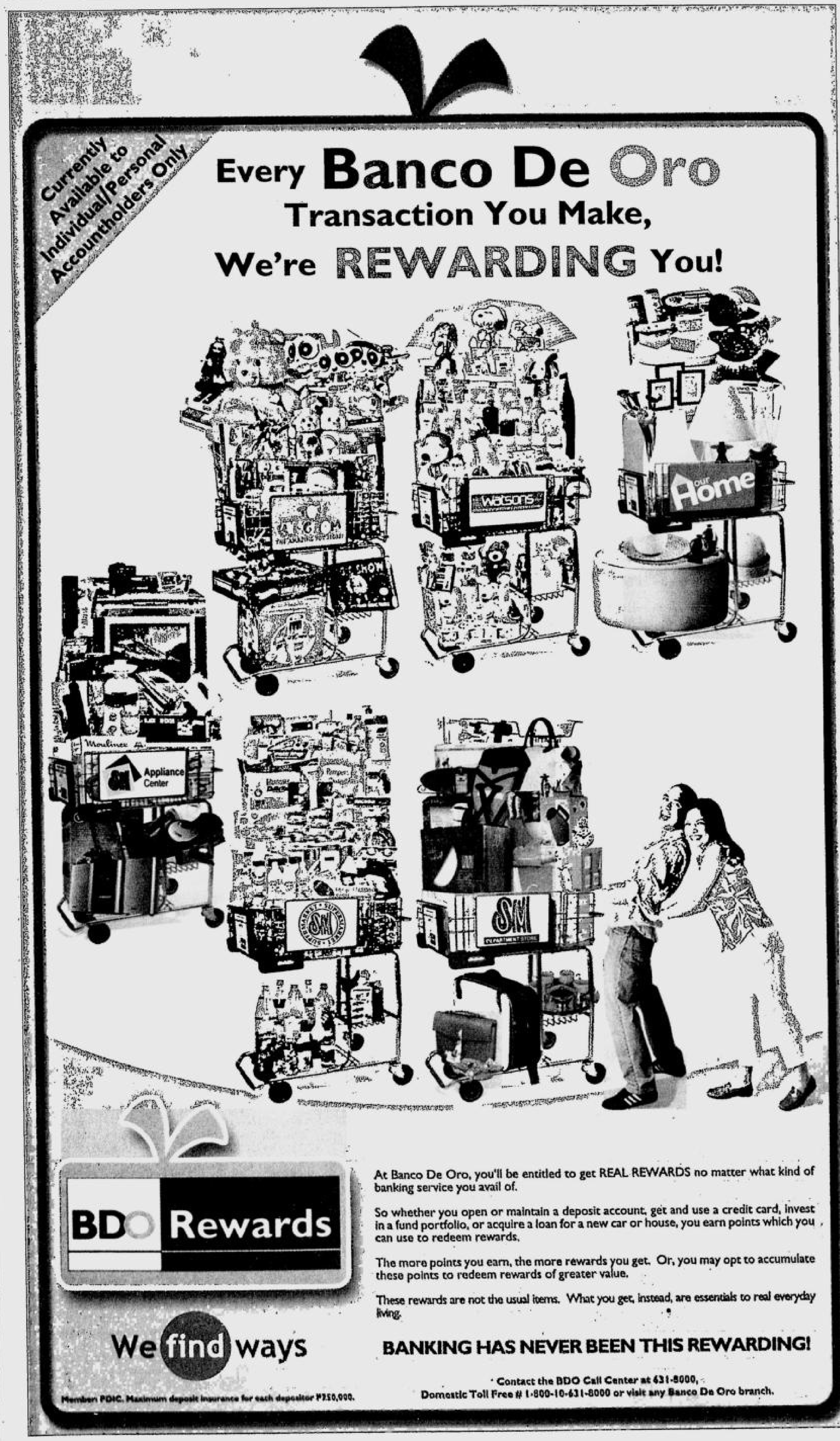
I READ with distaste Tonette Orejas' report, titled "The last Kamikaze stand in Bamban." (PDI, 4/13/05) It is a shame to glorify the Kamikaze pilots by erecting a peace memorial in Asahisayama Hill in Bamban, Tarlac. This is as if we are glamorizing the capability of the Kamikaze that inflicted heavy casualties on the American Liberation Forces.

As narrated by historian Rhonie de la Cruz, "Vice Admiral Takijuro Ohnishi of the Japanese Imperial Navy believed there was no other alternative to neutralize the gigantic American force converging at Leyte Gulf other than suicide attack units... each place to crash-drive into an enemy carrier."

As a World War II guerrilla veteran myself, I could not just easily forget the atrocities of the Japanese Imperial forces on innocent civilians during their (almost) four-year occupation of the country from 1942 to 1945. It would be better if a war memorial marker was erected honoring and recognizing the war exploits of those obscure guerrilla veterans—"Some 3,000 Aetas were with the 155th US Forces in the Philippines." But none was ever mentioned in the article which further stated that the "use of Kamikaze tactics was made compulsory for all pilots as sanctioned by the Japanese high command."

However, De la Cruz was right when he said, "It is for an understanding of the past and seeking lessons from that for our generations and the next. The need for peace is the most important lesson of that war." But let us not glorify the Kamikaze for their past.

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA,
district adjutant,
Veterans Federation of the Philippines,
Camarines Norte Veterans District, Pasig,
Daet, Camarines Norte 4600



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Floating logs vanish in Quezon town

LUCENA CITY—Thousands of typhoon victims in the towns of General Nakar, Infanta and Real have already lost everything precious—from property to family members.

This time, they are also losing the drifted logs that were promised to them by the government as free housing materials in the rebuilding of their shattered lives.

Infanta Bishop Rolando Tria-Tirona denounced the unexplained disappearance of thousands of drifted logs along the long coastlines of General Nakar, Infanta and Real, which, according to him, were intended for the housing project of homeless typhoon victims.

"Almost all drifted logs are gone but most of the typhoon victims are still homeless. I pity the homeless victims. There are no more logs left for their housing materials. There are lots of hanky-panky going on, there are lots of buyers (of logs and timber)," Tirona told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

Fr. Pete Montallana, coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples' Apostolate in the Prelature of Infanta and director of the Tribal Center for Development, has all pity for the indigenous people who look forward to having a share of lumber from the drifted logs.

"Most of them are sickly, homeless and orphaned. They want to start building houses of their own but it is now hard for them," Montallana said.

He said he had received reports that some desperate homeless victims living along the coast had decided to burn the logs instead.

Quoting reports from Agta tribesmen, Montallana also revealed that rampant illegal logging in Siera Madre still continued with the cuts logs being smuggled out of the forest at the backdoor of Tanay, Rizal.

Deacon Samuel Salazar said the drifted logs were being hauled in the evening by big boats to Mauban, Real and Dingalan for sawing in several illegal sawmills in those areas.

"We have photos and video footage to support our claims. We will submit it to DENR officials to force them to act before it's too late for the homeless victims," Salazar said.

He said no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo had promised homeless victims to have the first priority in the use of drifted logs as housing materials.

"But now, who has piles of lumber from the drifted logs? It's the group of known illegal loggers in the area because they have the ready manpower and equipment and reliable partners in the government to cover up their criminal acts. Nothing is left for the poor victims," he lamented.

Quezon Board Member Eladio Pasamba had once tagged the so-called "Mauban Boys" as the biggest syndicate of illegal loggers operating in Sierra Madre, which had been regularly hauling logs Mauban, passing through the Pacific Ocean.

According to Neil Astrera, a worker from the Tribal Center for Development, most of the time—especially in the afternoon—the coastal areas in General Nakar and Infanta were always teeming with people with chain saws.

"Sometimes, the cut logs, mostly red *lauan*, were being towed by boats towards covered river tributaries for safekeeping. Other loggers were too bold to pile their logs along the coasts. But obviously there were no government people around to monitor the cuttings. It's free for all," he said.

Antonio Diwa, the community environment and natural resources officer based in Real town, admitted the proliferation of unauthorized gatherers of drifted logs.

But he said the gathering of logs had long been under the jurisdiction of local officials and not the DENR. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cops arrest broadcaster in GenSan for libel case

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police here yesterday arrested a broadcast journalist while he was holding his public affairs program at radio station dxMD of the Radio Mindanao Network.

Alex Josol, station manager of RMN dxMD and host of the station's daily public affairs program "Maayong Buntag RMN," told the INQUIRER that the warrant officer of the General Santos City Police office even went inside the announcer's booth just to serve the warrant issued by the court.

Josol was charged with libel by Sarah Manilay, wife of city tourism officer Warren Manilay, before a local court here.

In his program aired in August last year, Josol urged the tourism officer to account for the alleged misused funds allocated for the Kalilangan Foundation.

Manilay's wife went to the station to clarify the issue against her husband. There, a verbal tussle occurred between Josol and Sarah.

On September 1 to 3 last year, Sarah claimed, Josol maligned her over the airlanes prompting her to file two counts of libel.

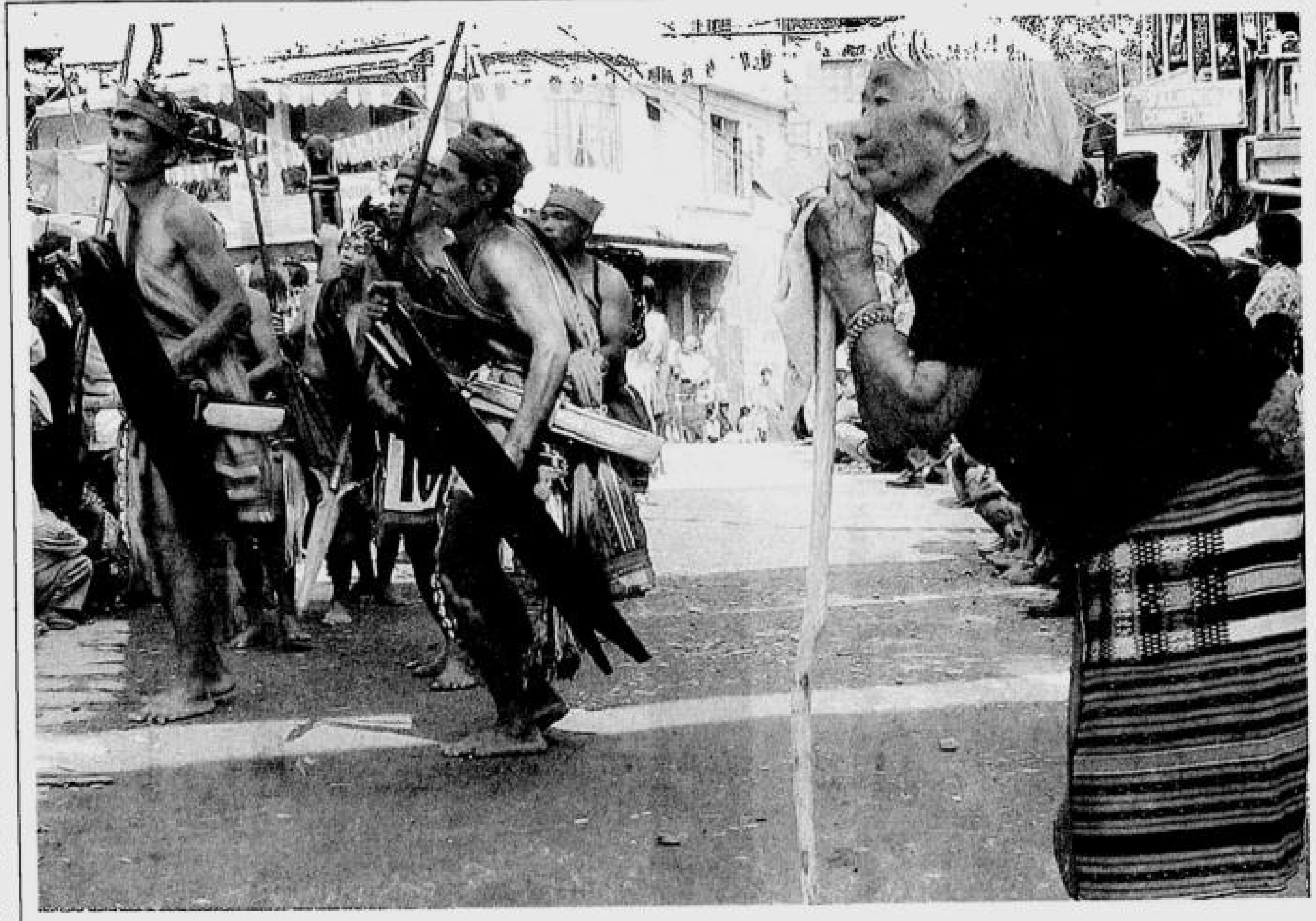
The City Prosecutor's Office came out with a joint resolution on April 12, claiming there were enough grounds to charge Josol with libel.

Josol, through his lawyer, filed a motion for reconsideration but the prosecution went on with the filing of the case.

Last week, the local court issued a warrant of arrest against the accused. The court set a P20,000 bond (P10,000 per count) for his temporary liberty.

Josol said he did not resist when SPO3 Elpidio Atiga, warrant officer of the local police, served the warrant.

He was brought to Pendatun Police station where he was detained. His colleagues in print, radio and TV, including some of his radio listeners and members of militant groups visited him in his cell. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



PASSING SCENE
An old woman joins the rest of her community in celebrating the *Imbayah*, a festival that is performed annually in Ifugao to accomodate a cyclical obligation to the gods and their ancestors.
EV ESPIRITU

Kalinga media group seeks help on killing

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—A group of media practitioners from Kalinga are asking help from various media groups, including the National Press Club, to seek justice for their colleague who was gunned down in November last year.

In a statement sent to the NPC, the Kalinga journalists said the lack of money of family members and their supporters has hampered the crusade for justice in the killing of Stephen Omaois.

"While it is true that government will handle the prosecution [of the suspects], the family, and their supporters feel the need for other legal minds to take part in the trial," the group said.

The statement was signed by 14 media practitioners in Kalinga.

Omaois, who used to write for the fortnightly newspaper Guru Press, was found dead near a public high school in Tabuk, the capital town of Kalinga, on Nov. 26 last year.

Thrill killing

According to police, he was killed by six teenagers who, while drinking inside a videoke bar in Tabuk, supposedly hatched a plan to kill the first person they would meet.

The police have arrested six suspects early this year. The pretrial conference of the case was set for May 13 at the Tabuk municipal trial court.

The Kalinga journalists expressed concern that while the suspects are now in jail and two of them have admitted having knowledge in the killing, they entered a not guilty plea during the April 8 arraignment.

"The family has turned down proposals for *areglo* or amicable settlement, opting instead to find justice in the courts. Poverty, however, [has become] a constraint," the group said.

They clarified, however, that their seeking the intervention of a private prosecutor should not be misunderstood as a sign of the lack of confidence in government prosecutors.

Too many cooks

"The idea is not for the private prosecutor to take over the case but only to collaborate with government prosecutors. We do not see this as a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth but [a case] of two heads being better than one," said Estanislao Albano Jr., Manila Bulletin correspondent in Kalinga and the group's convenor.

The group offered to shoulder the travel and lodging expenses of the assisting lawyer.

Members of the Nueva Vizcaya Press Club here said they would seek the help of the local chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines to consider the plea of the Kalinga journalists. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Prosecutors bungle case vs cop in reporter's slay

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The much-awaited trial on the murder of Pagadian City-based journalist Edgar Damalerio was stalled anew after the Regional Trial Court yesterday ruled that the information filed against his alleged killer was "defective."

Judge Ramon Codilla, of RTC Branch 19, yesterday gave the prosecution five days to amend the information filed against former policeman Guillermo Wapille.

The court also ordered the further detention of Wapille at the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center (BBRC) pending the filing of the amended information.

The judge also scheduled new trial dates of the case on May 23 and 24.

Wapille, of the Pagadian police intelligence section, is accused of killing Damalerio, managing editor of Mindanao Scribe and radio commentator of dxKP, on May 13, 2002.

During the hearing yesterday, Codilla said he found merit on the motion of the defense, questioning the validity of the information because it was signed only by a panel created to conduct the preliminary investigation and without the approval of the regional state prosecutor in Western Mindanao or prosecutor of Pagadian City.

Lawyer Honorato Hermosisima Jr., lead defense counsel, told the INQUIRER that they were amenable to the ruling because the prosecution should correct the "flawed" information before the start of the actual trial.

"Of course, we are amenable to it because we want the information corrected so that the proceedings would not be declared null and void in the end because the information was defective. The case should go back to Pagadian City and let it be approved by the proper authority," he said.

Under Rule 112 and 117 of the Rules of Court, Hermosisima said the information should be approved by the regional state prosecutor, city or provincial prosecutor.

The information on the murder case against Wapille was signed only by Assistant Regional State Prosecutor Ricardo Cabaron, 2nd Assistant Provincial Prosecutor for Sulu Dennis Araojo and 4th Assistant City Prosecutor Jaime Machutes.

Former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, in his memorandum order no. 16 dated July 3, 2002, directed Regional State Prosecutor Wilfredo Yu to take over the preliminary investigation as requested by lawyer Friolo Icao, chief of the National Bureau of Investigation Pagadian district office.

Yu, in his order dated July 4, 2002, then created the panel headed by Cabaron and designated them as acting city prosecutors of Pagadian to conduct the preliminary investigation of the Damalerio case.

Acting Cebu City Prosecutor Nicholas Sellon yesterday said his office would coordinate with the city prosecutor of Pagadian so the amended information would be filed in five days as ordered by the court.

"The court ruled that the information was defective in the sense (that) it was not properly approved," he said. "We would be coordinating with the Pagadian City prosecutor and would urge them to amend the information (and have it) signed by the proper authority."

Sellon said the court ruling was not a setback for the prosecution but a "a sort of a blessing in disguise."

"Had we gone ahead with the trial, there was the danger that it would be declared null and void in the end. We would be wasting our time," he said.

In an order dated Feb. 14, the Supreme Court approved the request of Gemman Damalerio, wife of the slain journalist, to transfer the venue of the trial in Cebu.

The High Tribunal also directed the court here to finish the trial in three months.

Capiz farmers turn to abaca

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—Expect in the next two or three years for abaca to be abundant, especially in Capiz's second district, as several rice farmers are going into abaca farming to augment their income.

Benjamin Gomo, acting chief of the Fiber Industry Development Authority in Western Visayas (Fida-6), said 32 farmers from Sigma town will initially plant abaca after attending the Training of Trainers (TOT) on abaca production last year.

Some 18 farmers from the nine other towns in the second district are now undergoing a similar training at the Sigmahonon Development Foundation Inc. Training Center in Barangay Bangonbangon in Sigma town.

Lesson

He said the participants would echo what they learned from the seminar to the other farmers in their respective municipalities.

Also attending the TOT seminar, which started on May 3 and would end on Friday, were 12 farmers from Iloilo, Aklan and Negros Occidental.

Gomo said that this year, two abaca nurseries would be put up in towns of Sigma and Dumalag, and next year, in Cuartero and Jamindan towns.

He said Sigma and Dumalag were identified as pilot areas for abaca production in a bid to make it as a major agribusiness of the farmers.

The other towns in the second district are Dao, Sapian, Ivisan, Tapaz, Mambusao and Jamindan.

Rice producers

According to the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist in Capiz, the province has 41,000 palay farmers, 60 percent of whom are in the second district of Capiz, which is a rice-producing area.

The idea for farmers to go into abaca production was a brainchild of Rep. Fredenil Castro of the second district, said Sigma Mayor Roberto Sualog.

He said the plan was conceptualized last year during a farmers' consultation dialogue and was implemented only this year after the congressman allocated P500,000 for the training program.

Idle land

Jane Tan-Castro, the congressman's wife who graced the opening of the seminar on his behalf, said the farmers could increase their income by planting abaca on idle lands that were not suitable for rice production.

She pointed out abaca was a promising export-oriented product.

Abaca is grown in 33 provinces of the country. The top ten producers are Catanduanes, Southern Leyte, Leyte, Davao Oriental, Western Samar, Surigao del Sur, Northern Samar, Davao del Sur, Sorsogon and Lanao del Sur.

Known as "Manila hemp," abaca fiber is obtained from the leaf sheath of the abaca. It is indigenous to the Philippines and is similar to banana in appearance except that the leaves are upright, pointed, narrower and more tapering than the leaves of banana.

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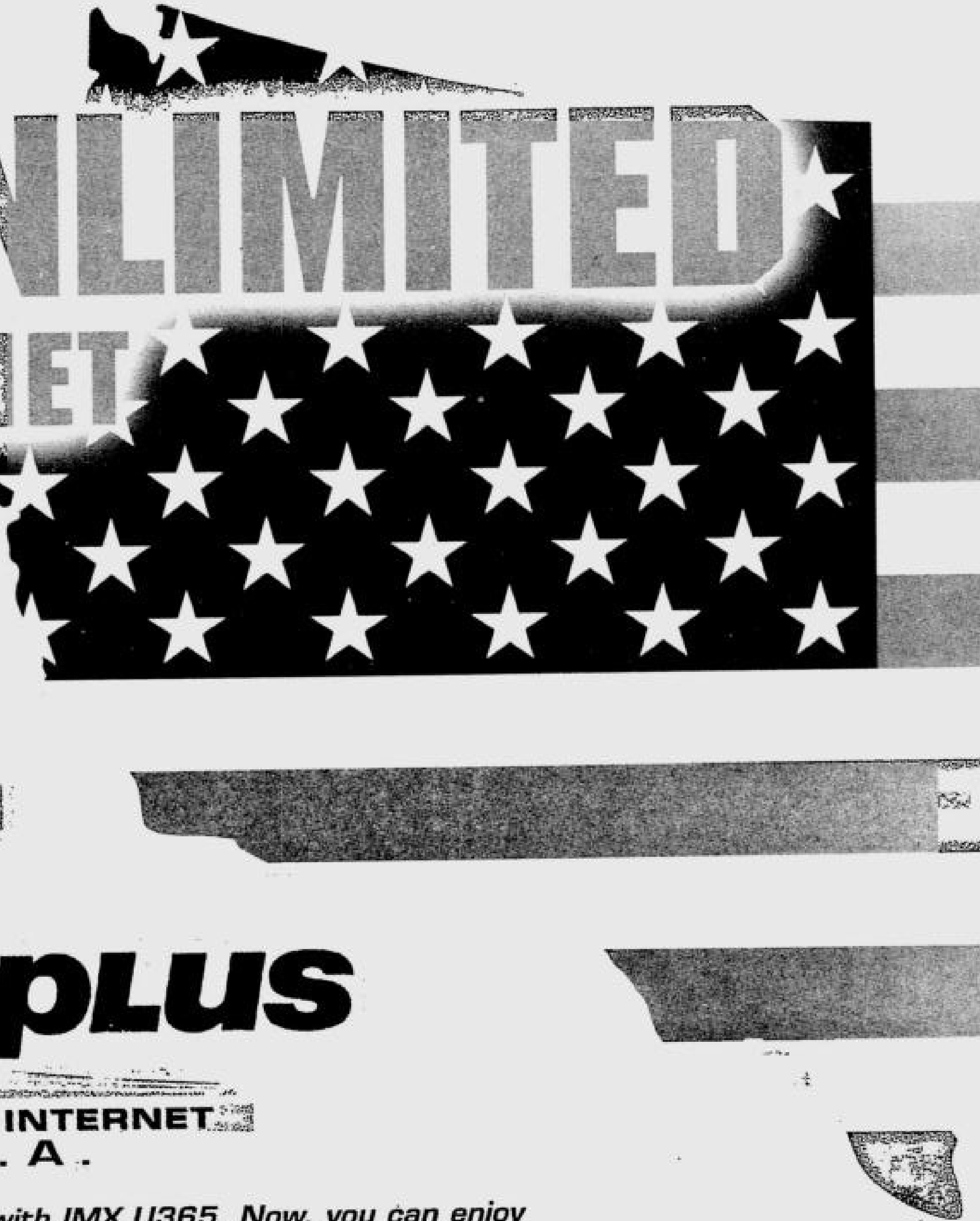

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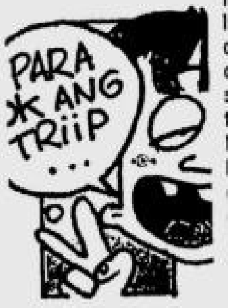
ROUNDUP

Ecija lawyer, son killed

CABANATUAN CITY—A lawyer and his son were killed by a lone gunman on Saturday in their rest-house in Barangay General Luna, Llanera town, 26 km east of here. Ambrosio Matias Jr., 47, and his son, Leonard, 22, a law student, died before reaching the hospital here. Police said the assailant shot Matias in the head in the presence of several family members and visitors at about 8 p.m. The younger Matias was shot in the chest when he tried to check what happened to his father. The older Matias had been handling several land dispute cases in his town and nearby areas ***Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Bus conductor with shabu


PARA ANG TRiiP ...

ILAGAN, Isabela—Police arrested a bus conductor after he was caught using shabu inside the bus along with the driver Sunday in Barangay Baligatan here. Charged with illegal use and possession of drugs was Samson Lauayan Jr. of RM Liner that plies the Santiago-Ilagan route. His companion, driver Marcos Angoluan, fled. Recovered from Lauayan were two sachets of shabu. Supt. Romeo Uy, Ilagan police chief, said Lauayan admitted that he and Angoluan were using shabu before hitting the road. ***Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

2 illegal fishers nabbed

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Members of the seaborne patrol of the municipal police arrested two persons caught fishing illegally in Laguna Lake last week. Senior Supt. Jaime D. Calungsod Jr., provincial police director, identified the suspects as Arnold D. Caballero, 32, and Reynaldo A. Gomez, 31, both of Barangay Aplaya, Pila, Laguna. Investigators said on April 30, on the shore of Barangay Gatid, Sta. Cruz, the lawmen chanced upon the suspects while catching small fish with a fine net commonly called *suro*. ***Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Stalk victim goes public

BAGUIO CITY—A city councilor has gone public about an affair because he fears being stalked by a former lover. Councilor Federico Mandapat Jr. said he had an intimate relationship with a high school guidance counselor, who had allegedly been badgering his family with text messages. The school official has sued Mandapat's wife and her three children for beating her up in February. The official said she had only been a close confidante of the councilor. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Village chief shot

URDANETA CITY—Two motorcycle-riding men on Friday shot and wounded a village chief who was on his way home from a cockfight derby in Asingan town. Melchor Corpuz of Barangay Pallna had bullet wounds in the belly and was taken to the Sacred Heart Hospital. The following day, armed men ransacked the house of Corpuz, police said. ***Nemesio de la Cruz, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Youth leader comatose

TABACO CITY—A local youth leader is fighting for life at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital in Legazpi City after a man went berserk on Saturday night. The victim, who is comatose, was identified as Joselito Desin, 18, chair of the Sangguniang Kabataan in Barangay Cobo here. Desin was serving as sportscaster in a basketball tournament sponsored by the SK when a man, identified as Alexander Boton, 22, suddenly pelted a rock at hit. As Desin fell to the ground, the man kicked a table, letting loose a live wire that electrocuted the victim. Barangay chair Dan Bataller sought the help of the suspect's siblings in bringing Boton immediately to a mental hospital. ***Job B. Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

3 nabbed for firearms

PuLis PuLis.

SINILOAN, Laguna—Police arrested three suspects for illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and a deadly weapon last week. Senior Supt. Jaime D. Calungsod Jr., provincial police director, identified the suspects as Wilfredo S. Quiap, 23; Jimmy C. Salba, 31, and Apolinario P. Embarca, 19, jobless. Policemen, led by PO2 Randy Flores, caught the suspects with a .38 cal. pistol, a .22 cal. pistol and a dagger at Plaza Redor here. The police action was prompted by a text message sent by a concerned citizen, which reported the trouble the suspects were making in the plaza. ***Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

3 arrested for mauling

CALAMBA CITY—Police here arrested three men who mauled a teenage girl on May 1. The Calamba City Police Office identified the suspects as Monic H. Rosales, 26; Beth O. Hinggan, 26; and Melanio P. Maatanguihan, 29, all of Barangay Uno here. The victim was identified as Annalyn B. Gallano, 16, a native of Catarman, Northern Samar and is now residing in the same barangay. ***Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Naty Sepe, 75

NATIVIDAD "Naty" Garcia Sepe, 75, mother of Associated Press-TV photojournalist Jun Sepe, died on May 9. She is survived by her sisters and brothers—Angie, Letty, Tita, Boy, Gerry, Gula, Chuchi and Baby—her children, Don and Edel, Lee, Maris and Larry, Nico and Maeve and Jun and Myra, and grandchildren. Her remains lie at the Loyola Chapels in Marikina City. Necrological services will be held tomorrow at the Christ Commission Fellowship at the St. Francis Square.

HELPLESS IN LANAO

Group to tap MILF in fight vs crime

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A civil society group in Lanao del Sur said it would seek the help of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) if the government could not put an end to kidnappings, car theft and drug trafficking in the province.

The Muslim Multisectoral Movement for Peace and Development (MMMPD) said it would rather have the MILF impose the shari'a law on criminals. Under the law, those found guilty could be hanged, have their fingers cut or even executed by firing squad.

The group said the rising criminality in Lanao del Sur seemed to be aimed at justifying the antiterror campaigns in the area and the presence of American troops there for the past three months.

Hadji Abdullah Dalidig, chair of the MMMPD, also lashed out at the ineffectiveness of the local leaders for failing to stem the rising crime incidence since late last year.

"I don't believe it is difficult for the local leaders here to arrest these criminals for we know one another. We don't feel safe anymore traveling in and out of Marawi City, and it has become a mystery to us why the police and the military could not stop them," Dalidig said.

Dalidig said that even rich Muslim traders were thinking of moving out of the province.

"Although we know who are responsible for these crimes, we are helpless. Eight out of 10 kidnap victims these days are Muslims," Dalidig said.

In the past, most kidnap victims came from nearby cities, such as Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, and were taken by their abductors to the two Lanao provinces.

On May 2, fish trader Leonardo Agan and his wife Philadelphia were kidnapped and brought to Lanao del Sur. The woman was released that same day but her husband has remained in the hands of their captors.

Lanao del Sur Rep. Faysah Dumarpa admitted that criminal activities had been rampant.

He said he would request Director General Arturo Lomibao, Philippine National Police chief, to recall policemen serving as escorts of guests and politicians.

He said he would also ask for more policemen to be deployed in the province.

"They are supposed to maintain peace and order in the province. Instead, they are busy escorting guests and VIPs which should not be their priority tasks," Dumarpa said. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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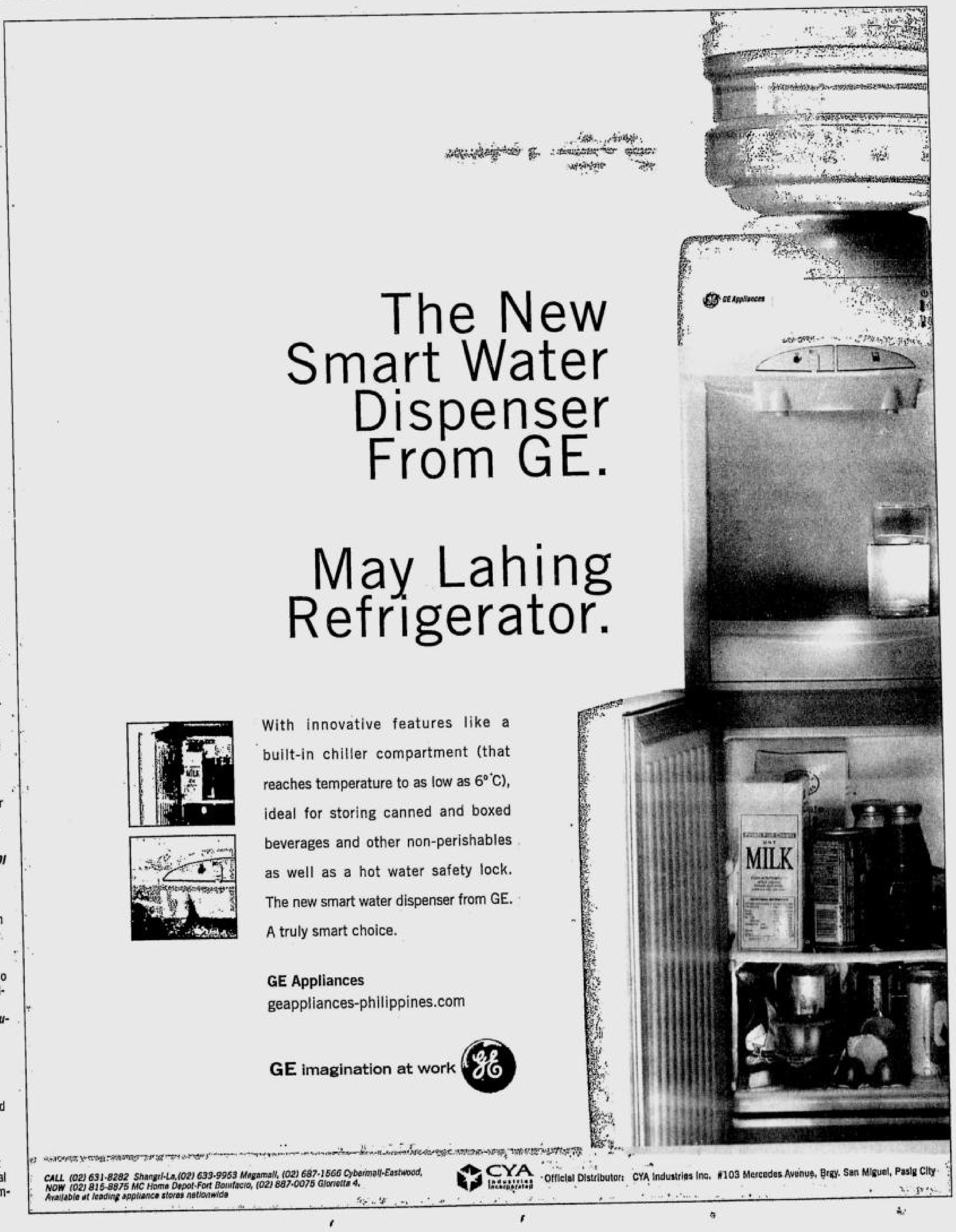
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Another Bayan Muna leader attacked, hurt

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—A top Bayan Muna official based in Eastern Samar survived an assassination attempt Sunday.

Leo Bagares, 42, vice chair of Bayan Muna in Eastern Samar, was wounded in the chest, legs and stomach when he was shot several times by two motorcycle-riding men at around 7 p.m. on May 8 just outside his house in Barangay Sulangan, Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

The attempt on Bagares' life was the fifth involving a Bayan Muna official in Eastern Visayas over the last two months.

Bagares was immediately rushed to a district hospital at the town proper of Guiuan, which was about 10 km from Sulangan, where he was stabilized, before he was transferred on Monday morning to a private hospital in Tacloban City, which is 312 km from Guiuan.

From hospital to hospital

Nestor Nirza, Bayan Muna's regional information officer, said Bagares had to be transferred to Tacloban due to lack of equipment in the Guiuan hospital.

Bagares has been declared by doctors to be in stable condition, Nirza said.

Senior Supt. Pio Manito, police director of Eastern Samar, told the INQUIRER that he immediately directed his men in Guiuan to conduct a thorough investigation of the latest attack on a Bayan Muna personality.

The series of attacks against the leaders here of the militant party list group began on March 14 when its regional chair, lawyer Felidito Dacut, was shot dead by two armed men while he was on board a jeepney that was cruising Real Street, this city.

Other attacks

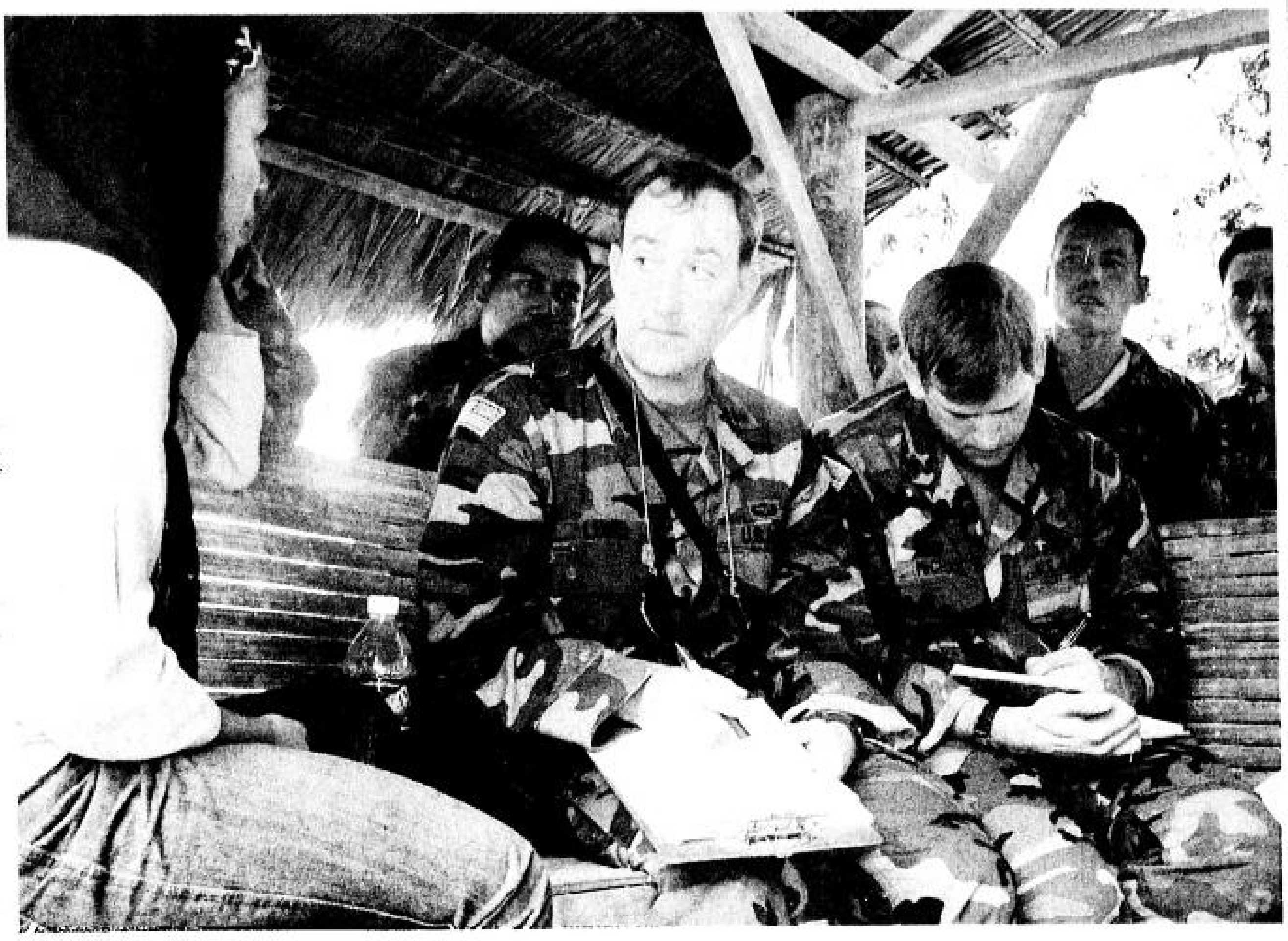
Almost three weeks later, on April 9, the group's Eastern Samar coordinator, Aldin Ambida, survived an assassination attempt.

Six days later, on April 15, two still unknown assailants shot dead Alfredo Davis, the Bayan Muna coordinator of Mahaplag, Leyte, while he was on his way to the Mahaplag municipal court where he worked as court interpreter. His wife, Imelda, the court's stenographer and a member of Abanse Pinay, was wounded in the same attack.

Nirza said the fourth attack involved Diosdado Abunda, 48, a Bayan Muna organizer in Sulat, Eastern Samar, who was shot by unidentified armed men last May 3. Abunda is still recuperating in a private hospital in the city.

"We strongly condemn this incident. We hope that what appears to be a systematic attempt to silence Bayan Muna will be… given proper and rightful solution by our government," Nirza said.

Bayan Muna has blamed the military for the series of attacks against its members but Maj. Jovito Palparan, commanding officer of the Army's 8th Infantry Division based in Camp Maulong, Catbalogan, Samar had denied any military involvement in any of the attacks.



PULSE AMERICA
Two US Army officials interview a Muslim woman in Panamao, Jolo to assess residents' reaction to a proposed joint RP-US military exercise on the island. Visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick warned that increasing links between Mindanao militants and regional terror groups were blocking efforts to bring peace to Mindanao.
AFP

Cops baffled by death of Japanese in Ilocos home

LAOAG CITY—Police investigators looking into the murder of a Japanese in Solsona, Ilocos Norte on Saturday remain baffled as initial findings showed no indication of forced entry into the house where the victim and his Filipino wife lived.

Shinya Takemoto, 59, was found sprawled on the floor of his room in Barangay Mariquet in Solsona on Saturday morning. Takemoto bore several hack wounds. His wife, Maryjane, found him dead at 4 a.m. Saturday.

SPO4 Tiborcio Agustin, of the Solsona police, said they did not find signs of struggle inside the room where Takemoto was found.

"Only the gate and the main door leading to the house were found open when policemen arrived. The couple's jewelry, cash and other valuables were intact while no household [appliance] was reported missing," Agustin said.

Maryjane told police that she checked on her husband early morning when she noticed that the light inside his room was switched on.

The victim was left alone in the house as Maryjane slept at the adjoining house owned by her parents, police said.

Representatives from the Japanese Embassy inspected the crime scene and left the town on Saturday night after a briefing.

Agustin said Japanese Embassy representatives Reynaldo Licong and Katsuya Hiruta asked for copies of investigation reports before they left Takemoto's house.

Milagros Gonzales, Ilocos Norte manager of the Department of Tourism, said her office was extending the necessary help that the Japanese Embassy may need.

"We are taking a personal hand to follow up on the case because this involves a foreigner. We want to guarantee the safety of our foreign visitors despite this incident," Gonzales said.

The Takemoto couple started living in Solsona town in May last year after they arrived from Japan where they stayed for a year. They were married in 2002. *Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Race for governor of ARMM narrows as 1 candidate withdraws

COTABATO CITY—Basilan Assemblyman Hatimil Hassan has withdrawn from the "free-zone" Aug. 8 elections for governor and other officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), leaving the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with only one candidate—reelectionist Gov. Parouk Hussin.

Hassan, chair of the MNLF Council of 15 and speaker of the 24-member Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA), withdrew from the gubernatorial race on May 6, two weeks after he filed his certificate of candidacy at the Commission on Elections in Western Mindanao.

Hassan's move came after former Maguindanao Rep. Guimid Matalam spoke on radio challenging unidentified gubernatorial aspirants to an armed confrontation. But sources close to the Matalams said the former congressman was "speaking in jest" when he aired his challenge in an "ambush [radio] interview."

Members of Hassan's staff had denied that the withdrawal from the gubernatorial race had anything to do with Matalam's statement. Instead, Hassan's staff said, it was done to give way to his cousin, Basilan Rep. and Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin, who is also running for regional governor.

Others said Hassan opted to withdraw to prevent the breaking away of the MNLF Council of 15 to which he and Hussin belong, and "to preserve the unity of the Basileños."

Hussin is also a member of the 15-member MNLF Council that overthrew Nur Misuari from the MNLF chairmanship in September 2001. ARMM is composed of the provinces of Basilan, Lanao Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

As these developed, political observers were quick to reckon the winning chances of each of the gubernatorial hopefuls by geographical matrix: Basilan will have only one candidate, Salapuddin; Lanao Sur also has one candidate in incumbent ARMM Vice Gov. Mahid Mutilan; Sulu is represented solely by Hussin; Tawi-Tawi, none.

Only Maguindanao has three candidates—Shariff Aguak town Mayor Zaldy Uy-Ampatuan, Matalam and business tycoon Ibrahim P. Paglas III, also a former town mayor.

But amid speculations of violence, police and military authorities said they were prepared.

"Police and military checkpoints are in place to enforce the Comelec gun ban," said ARMM police director Chief Supt. Sukarno Ikbala.

Ikbala said the regional police office has been closely coordinating with the military to prevent election-related violence that may erupt before, during and after the holding of the political exercise.

The campaign period for gubernatorial, vice gubernatorial and regional legislative assembly candidates starts on June 23. *Nash B. Maulana and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
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Is there light at end of Philex tunnel?

Editor's note: This story won first prize in the writing contest among fellows of the 2005 Graciano Lopez Jaena journalism workshop conducted by the University of the Philippines' College of Mass Communication on May 1-6 at UP Baguio. The author is the INQUIRER*'s correspondent for Nueva Vizcaya.*

By Melvin Gascon
Tuba, Benguet

IT WAS a painful parting that day for Junior and Ronald, both 9. Ronald was leaving with his entire family—and everything they had—for Naguilian town in La Union.

They have been the closest of friends, Grade 4 classmates at the Philex Mines Elementary School. They had played in the same neighborhood in the mining village of Padcal in Barangay Camp 3, Tuba, Benguet.

Their fathers were employees of Philex Mining Corp. Ronald's father, who had worked there for the past 23 years, was among those retrenched as part of the company's decongestion program.

Ronald's family had to leave the house where he and his two siblings were born. Philex management cut their power and water supplies when their families did not heed eviction orders.

Ronald's family will have to learn to live without the privileges of free housing, free electricity, and free water that Philex had given them for years. Gone, too, is the free and "heavily subsidized" schooling for Ronald and his sisters, which the company had always been proud to have bestowed for decades on residents of Padcal.

Smooth stop

The issue of decongestion is the latest controversy to hound Philex in its ambitious attempt to be the first mining company in Benguet to officially, and—its officials hope—smoothly close down operations in Padcal. With just about 65 million tons of ore reserves left for it to extract, the company is anticipating total shutdown by 2007 or 2011.

As a "model of responsible mining in the country" by standards of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Philex wants to prove that its proposed mine decommissioning and rehabilitation plan in Padcal will work.

According to a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) report by the MGB and Colin Legarde Hubo in 2003, the Padcal decommissioning will be "a test case for the company, as there is yet no documented mining community in the country that has developed into a self-reliant political unit at the post-mining stage."

The eviction of Ronald's family and those of about 200 former Philex employees, and the controversy accompanying it may just be the first hump in the dark tunnel that the company is leading itself into.

Philex earlier set April 16 as deadline for 113 retired and dismissed workers to leave its mine compound following a court ruling and a labor arbiter's findings that affirmed the retrenchments and evictions. The eviction order included about 60 store owners, public utility drivers, and workers' family members.

The evictees, some of whom are either too old or had nobody to take care of them, refused to leave. Philex had to hire trucks to haul their belongings and bring them to any place outside the compound.

"Many of [those who were evicted] decided to go back home to their provinces, and the company helped them to get there," said geologist Redempta Baluda, Philex environment officer.

She said the company no longer tried to find out if the families were relocating to a house of their own or a rented one, or were just moving in to live with another family.

The decongestion is inevitable, Baluda said, as the company had to cut back on labor and mine camp expenses, which amounted to P5 million a day.

The amount includes expenditures for power and water rationing for about 14,000 Padcal residents, as well as salaries of school teachers and medical and dental staff members.

Microcosm

The issue of eviction is but a microcosm of how the company has exploited the locality's human and natural resources, said Joan Carling, chair of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, a militant nongovernment organization that looks after the welfare of indigenous peoples in the Cordillera.

"To drive away the workers is an act that is very inhuman, after they have exploited these people who have served them for so many years," Carling said.

She said she did not believe the company officials' claim that Philex was losing heavily, that it had to retrench its employees and drive away dependents to cut down on expenses.

According to its latest financial report, Philex, for the first quarter of 2004, recorded the lowest metal production in the last five years. This, however, was "partially compensated" for by a substantial rise in the prices of copper and gold, which were reportedly at their highest levels in the last nine years.

Gross revenues during the first six months of 2004 amounted to P1.7 billion compared to P1.8 billion in 2003, and the average foreign exchange rate was more favorable this year, partially offsetting the effects of lower production output, the report said.

Carling claimed that the company seemed to be losing because it was trying to save capital to kick-start operations in its Boyongan copper project in Surigao del Norte and Agusan del Norte, in partnership with Anglo-American Philippines and Anglo-American Plc. According to the company website, the project is set to start commercial operations in 2010.

PHILEX officials inspect open mining site in Tuba, Benguet. LEONCIO G. BALBIN JR.

Civil society groups fear that when the Padcal mine shuts down, the village, which is touted today as a bustling community, will turn into a ghost town, with its estimated 14,000 inhabitants being driven out of the mining compound, jobless and without any source of decent livelihood.

Why? The majority of the mine compound's present inhabitants are not from the place. Philex records show that 60 percent of the workers are from the Ilocos region, mostly Pangasinan and La Union, while only 30 percent come from the Cordillera, either from Benguet, Mt. Province or Ifugao.

"We had adopted the policy that those from the area are the priority [in job placement]. The problem is, the job openings required skills which the applicants, who are locals, did not have," Baluda said.

While Philex may claim to have helped residents of Padcal and of neighboring communities venture into small-scale industries, these projects are not at the level that could provide self-help for the communities to cut the "culture of dependence" on the company, Carling said.

Philex is looking at the prospects of agro-forestry (growing of gmelina, *ipil-ipil* and coffee), swine raising, and the handicraft industry as possible alternative sources of income for the people.

So what would happen to the structures at the Padcal mine site after the mills stop running?

There's nothing in the present laws, even the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, that requires a mining company that has closed down its operations to turn over to the community all the assets of the mining project.

According to Carling, a bill, which was introduced by former Benguet Rep. Ronaldo Cosalan, was killed in the House of Representatives reportedly due to intense lobbying by giant mining companies.

Mined out

What is only mandated in present laws, said Carling, was for companies to rehabilitate "mined-out" areas.

According to Baluda, Philex would be put under a 10-year rehabilitation program, and the site may be converted either into an ecotourism destination, a miners' barracks or an industrial zone.

In addition, the three mine tailings dams will be "re-vegetated" and converted into grassland. While insisting that the soil at the tailings ponds is not toxic, the Philex official said houses might not be built there because the dried-up earth was not stable enough to support any building.

Rehabilitation may be easier said than done. Carling cited the case of the abandoned mines of Benguet Corp. in Itogon town, which had turned what used to be vegetable farms into wasteland, and where the mining compound, though a virtual junkyard, was now off-limits to local villagers.

"Even if the company will not rehabilitate the area, government does not go after these mining companies. They leave the area and go scot-free," she said.

Dried-up

If Philex's present environment programs were a gauge of its ability and sincerity to protect and rehabilitate the environment, it would not seem to be faring well.

While officials claim that the company has been spending millions of pesos for its environment programs, the efforts appear not to have borne fruit.

In 2004 alone, Philex spent some P113 million for "environmental expenses," but officials could not cite a single creek or spring that has been revived because of its reforestation projects.

"It is a normal phenomenon in the hydrologic cycle that at this time of the year (summer), water is rather scarce. In all places, supply is really deteriorating," Baluda explained.

But Carling said: "The reforested areas were mere patches [on the mountains], so that the effects on the environment are not readily felt. I think this is more of the PR [public relations] side of things."

CPA officials claim that a bigger volume of the already-scarce water supplies coming from natural springs is being sucked by mining activities, depriving local residents of water for domestic use. Residents now depend on the daily ration of water supplied by the company.

The decline in water supply becomes even more menacing with reports of alleged toxification of the Bued River, into which Philex dumps its effluents.

Faced with uncertainties, Philex officials cannot help but be cautious about their pronouncements on the looming project phaseout.

But Baluda tries to fan the embers of hope that the company will not be ending its operations by 2011 after all.

"We're still in the process of trying to find other mineral deposits in nearby areas," she said. "So it's not totally definite that we will end the project soon."

This was affirmed by Edgar Prangan, mine division chief, who said Philex's Padcal mines were there to stay for many more years.

Even so, he said workers might find hope in the company's mining expansion in the legendary Kennon Road in nearby Barangay Camp 4, and portions of the Philippine Military Academy reservation in Camp 6.

Or, they may be re-hired for the Boyongan copper project in Mindanao.

Health hazards

Claims vary on the health risks that miners and milling plant workers face in the course of their work.

Carling said there had been cases of Philex workers having developed respiratory diseases and hearing defects. Cases are not recorded among active workers because of alleged falsification by the company's medical personnel on its workers' true state of health.

But Baluda denied this, saying that independent medical teams had been regularly conducting check-ups on the Philex personnel, and their findings supposedly matched company diagnoses.

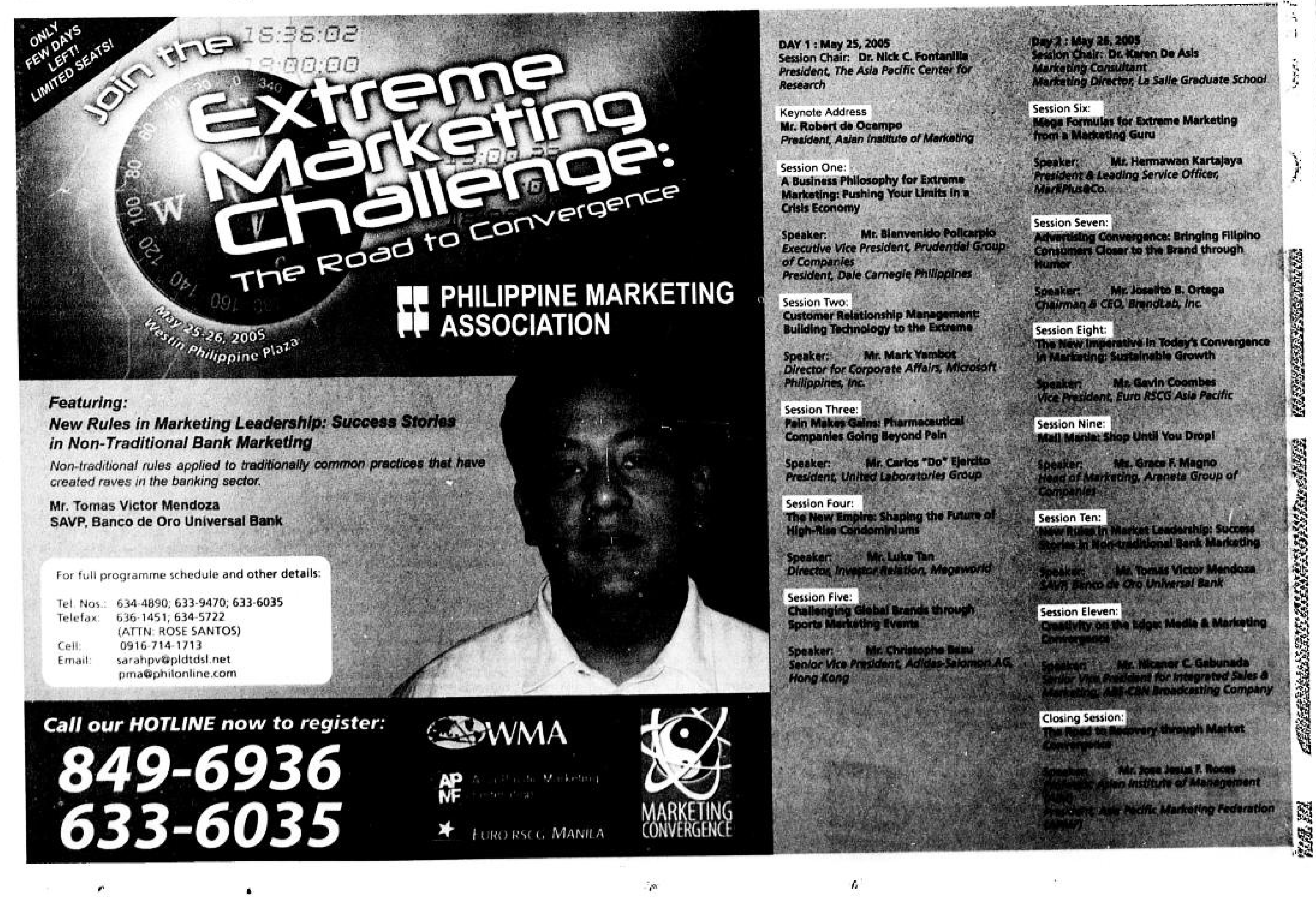
One miner said he was aware that the health hazards he was facing for working on an eight-hour shift 700 meters below the surface, in a pitch-black, dusty and sooty environment, might not manifest overnight.

"I do not feel anything bad. I just don't know in the future," he said in Ilocano.

"It may be the most dangerous job, but it's the only one we have," he continued, as he positioned his pneumatic drill against a 7-foot boulder.

As the drill loudly rattled against the solid rock, he and his three companions did not budge. They did not have protective goggles, earplugs, gloves and overalls—just sheer guts and the desire to earn a living for their family.

Then the miner put down his drill. He turned and pointed his headlamp at the next tunnel he would enter. The beam pierced the darkness, but he could see nothing—no end-point, no light at the end.



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Speaker: Mr. Bienvenido Policarpio
Executive Vice President, Prudential Group of Companies
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Session Two:
Customer Relationship Management: Building Technology to the Extreme
Speaker: Mr. Mark Yambot
Director for Corporate Affairs, Microsoft Philippines, Inc.

Session Three:
Pain Makes Gains: Pharmaceutical Companies Going Beyond Pain
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Session Four:
The New Empire: Shaping the Future of High-Rise Condominiums
Speaker: Mr. Luke Tan
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Session Five:
Challenging Global Brands through Sports Marketing Events
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Senior Vice President, Adidas-Salomon AG, Hong Kong

Day 2 : May 26, 2005
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Session Six:
Mega Formulas for Extreme Marketing from a Marketing Guru
Speaker: Mr. Hermawan Kartajaya
President & Leading Service Officer, MarkPlus&Co.

Session Seven:
Advertising Convergence: Bringing Filipino Consumers Closer to the Brand through Humor
Speaker: Mr. Joselito B. Ortega
Chairman & CEO, BrandLab, Inc.

Session Eight:
The New Imperative in Today's Convergence in Marketing: Sustainable Growth
Speaker: Mr. Gavin Coombes
Vice President, Euro RSCG Asia Pacific

Session Nine:
Mall Mania: Shop Until You Drop!
Speaker: Ms. Grace F. Magno
Head of Marketing, Araneta Group of Companies

Session Ten:
New Rules in Market Leadership: Success Stories in Non-traditional Bank Marketing
Speaker: Mr. Tomas Victor Mendoza
SAVP, Banco de Oro Universal Bank

Session Eleven:
Creativity on the Edge: Media & Marketing Convergence
Speaker: Mr. Nicanor C. Gabunada
Senior Vice President for Integrated Sales & Marketing, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Company

Closing Session:
The Road to Recovery through Market Convergence
Speaker: Mr. Jose Jesus F. Roces
[illegible] Asian Institute of Management [illegible]
President, Asia Pacific Marketing Federation [illegible]

Bizarre twist in Ramos slay: Sister tagged

From page A1

vulnerable to "extreme mood swings."

Barangay officials said Lumagui lived five houses away from the three sisters, who lived by themselves in a 2-story, six-bedroom house.

Lumagui, 39, said the April 24 break-in at 5552 Boyle St. in Makati City was only intended to scare Ramos and not to kill her.

"Ma'am Ester came to me last December to ask me to scare her sister into giving the money belonging to her [Ester]," Lumagui told state prosecutors, speaking in Pilipino.

He said the money which Ester supposedly wanted to get came from a pension she had been getting but which the diplomat kept, releasing only the amounts Ester would need.

He said Ester promised him and his group P20,000 for the job.

"We had no plans to hurt her but only to tie her up and frighten her," Lumagui said.

Another sister, Leticia Ramos, who is also an officer at the Department of Foreign Affairs, was injured in the incident and reported the break-in to police.

Looking for Ester

A team of INQUIRER reporters tried to locate Ester but authorities had no information on where she could be found. One National Bureau of Investigation official said she was in a hospital.

Lumagui was among three people so far arrested in connection with the Ramos slaying. He had been tagged by investigators earlier as the possible mastermind.

Asked how credible Lumagui's allegation was in the absence of any statements from Ester, State Prosecutor Manuel Velasco said:

THE ALLEGED leader of the four-man gang, Roberto Lumagui, (left) is presented to the media by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay. At right is Makati police chief Supt. Jovy Gutierrez. JOSEPH AGCAOILI

"That's why I have already ordered a deeper investigation on the part of the NBI. We will also invite Ester for a preliminary investigation."

Lumagui made his claim after Velasco, who presided over the inquest proceeding, asked him if there was anything he wanted to declare.

Lumagui said he initially dismissed Ester's request since he owed the Ramoses a debt of gratitude.

Earlier this year, he said Ester again reminded him about her request, saying that she would get other people to do the job and Lumagui would be the one blamed for it.

Three children

Days before the killing, Lumagui said, three men allegedly tried to pressure him into carrying out the sister's request, or they would harm his family.

To ascertain that he really knew Ester, for whom he said he also did errands, Velasco subjected Lumagui to intense grilling.

To show he was familiar with the elder sister, Lumagui identified her three children, including two who were named Jessie, 38, and Stuart, 30.

Leticia not involved

He described Ester as a housewife who was married to a former US serviceman, now dead.

Asked why the diplomat was keeping Ester's supposed pension money, Lumagui said in Pilipino:

"She's not in the right state of mind. She talks by her lonesome and she goes in and out of the hospital."

He identified the facility as the Saint Claire Hospital.

"She's a one-day millionaire," he said, adding that Ester was allegedly careless with her money, which prompted the diplomat to keep it for her.

Lumagui repeated what the other accused had said about the killing being an accident. He said they never intended to rob Alicia.

Asked if Leticia had anything to do with the killing, Lumagui replied: "*Wala ho* (No, sir)."

But Edmund Arugay, NBI regional director for Metro Manila, said: "Nobody is cleared for now."

He also asked that a hold order be issued against Ester, who has a US visa.

Velasco also ordered the NBI to conduct polygraph and neuropsychiatric tests on all the accused.

Lumagui gave the same story in an interview with reporters.

"I repeatedly refused to do it, but then she threatened me," Lumagui told reporters.

Guilt-stricken

Lumagui said that his guilty conscience prompted him to surrender to the authorities.

"I was bothered by my conscience, and I am also thinking of my family," he said. "I hope they [the Ramoses] could forgive me. I really did not want to do it, I was just caught in the middle."

He claimed it was his companions who gagged Ramos and that he was on one side of the room when it happened.

Lumagui added that he was a childhood friend of Ester's sons.

"[Alicia and Leticia] were really kind to me," he said.

Nueva Ecija hideout

Lumagui surrendered to Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and the Makati police on Monday night after staying more than three weeks at a friend's house in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija.

The two other suspects in custody are Joel Ablay and Michael Cenil, who pointed to Lumagui as the mastermind.

Only one more suspect, Jun Maricar, is at large, police said.

Tip from relative

Barangay Palanan chair Arnold Magpantay, who helped arrange Lumagui's surrender, said the suspect agreed to give up after he was told that two of his companions had implicated him.

"I called him up and said he was already in danger. He agreed, and I asked the help of the mayor and the Makati police to fetch him from Nueva Ecija," said Magpantay.

Magpantay said he was told of Lumagui's supposed involvement in the crime by a relative of the suspect two days after it happened. Soon, Ablay and Cenil were arrested.

In her statement to police, Leticia had said that six men were involved in the break-in. Police said they were certain there were only four robbers. *With a report from Tarra V. Quismundo, Nikko Dizon and Margaux C. Ortiz*

DFA sees speedy resolution of case

By Nikko Dizon

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs expressed hope yesterday that the killing of one of its top diplomats, Alicia Ramos, would soon be solved and those responsible convicted.

"The officers and staff of the department, as well as the colleagues, friends and family of Alicia, could now see a speedy resolution of this case," acting Foreign Secretary Franklin Ebdalin said.

"With this development, we all fervently pray that the soul of Alicia will finally find peace in the Lord's heavenly kingdom," he added, referring to the National Bureau of Investigation statement that it had solved the case.

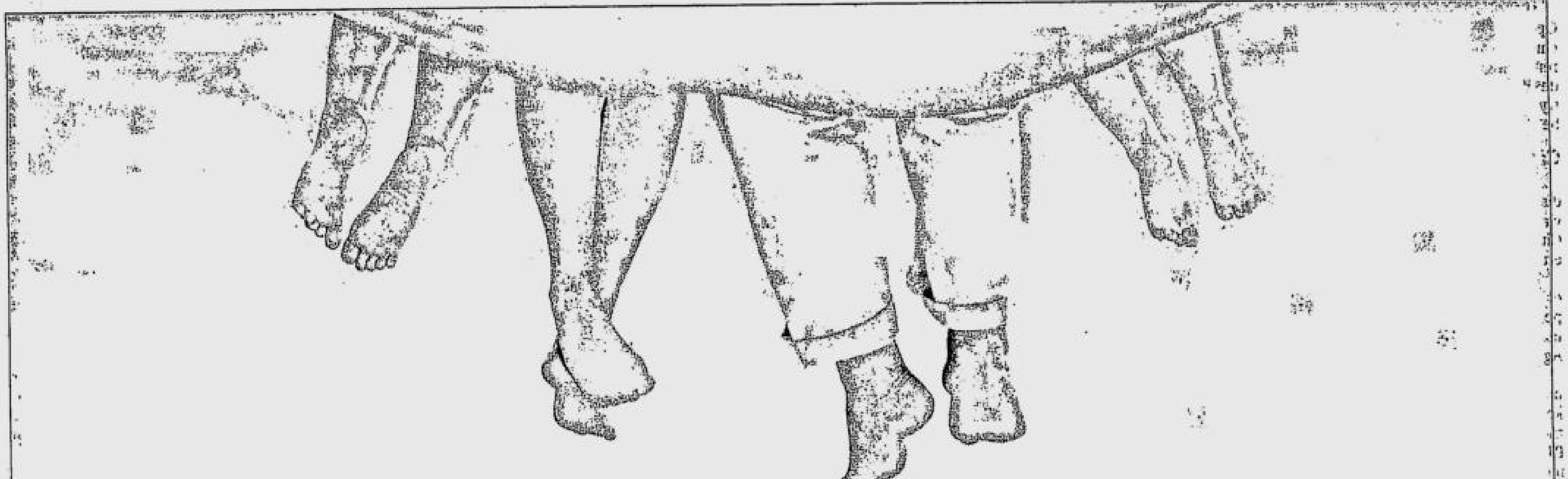
Ambassador Erlinda F. Basilio has been appointed Assistant Secretary for the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs (Aspac) to succeed Ramos in the post.

RAMOS

An experienced diplomat, Basilio assumed her new post yesterday.

Basilio was director of the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) from September 2003 prior to her new assignment.

She served as ambassador to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, at the Philippine Embassy in Stockholm from 1997 to 2003.



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After jeeps, Metro rail fares up next

By Clarissa S. Batino

AFTER jeeps and buses, metro railways are likely to increase their fares by the middle of the year, according to government sources.

"There are strong indications that the Palace would approve a long-standing petition of the Light Rail Transit Authority and the Metro Rail Transit 3 to increase fares by P10 after additional wages are approved in June," a transport official said.

The agencies running the MRT-3 from North Edsa to Baclaran and LRT Line 1 (Monumento to Baclaran) and Line 2 (Santolan in Pasig to Recto in Manila) have complained of losses from increased power and overhead costs. With more than 800,000 passengers riding the metro railways daily, power accounts for 30 percent of their costs.

The MRT-3 and LRTA submitted their petition for a fare adjustment in March 2004. Since then, jeeps and buses had been allowed to increase their fares twice.

The transportation department said Malacañang would have to decide on the fare hike petition, adding that the issue involved macroeconomic and political implications.

Rail agencies had complained that once the recently approved P2 increase in the fare of public utility vehicles are implemented starting May 26, the gap between rail and PUV fares would further narrow.

By that time, jeeps would charge P7.50 for the first four kilometers; regular buses will collect P8 for the first five kilometers.

The MRT charges a minimum fare of P10 while LRT collects a minimum of P12. For the whole stretch, both lines collect P15 which they want raised to P25.

The MRT-3 management wants to increase the minimum fare to P16 for the first three stations. For every succeeding three stations, each commuter would have to pay an additional P3, bringing the maximum fare from the current rate of P15 to P25 for the entire stretch of 13 stations.

For LRTA Line 1, the proposed scheme was a minimum fare of P12 for the first four stations, and an additional P1 for every succeeding station.

For Line 2, the P12 minimum fare would apply to the first two stations. The four succeeding stations would entail an increase of P2 for each station; the remaining five stations would charge an additional P1 each.

Currently, the LRTA charges P12 for the first 13 stations of Line 1 and the first five stations of Line 2, and P15 for the last five stations of Line 1 and last six stations of Line 2.

An average of 320,000 passengers ride Line 1 daily while about 140,000 use Line 2 each day. The MRT said it carries more than 400,000 commuters daily.

LRTA administrator Mel Robles said the board would discuss the fare adjustment this week. "There is obviously a need to narrow the gap of fares between PUVs and railways. We'll see how the government acts on our petition submitted last year," he said.

Mariano Gui, MRT-3 spokesperson, said that by May 26, there would only be a P2 difference between the minimum fare of regular buses and the MRT-3.

He added that the MRT-3 has airconditioned coaches for passenger comfort.

"We have improved our service since we imposed a new zonal tariff structure in March," said Gui. "Since then, we have reduced the queues in our ticketing booth even as our ridership continues to go up."

Both rail agencies believe that they should expand their capacity by buying more trains to meet the increasing demand, and in the interest of public safety.

Cops raid QC illegal drugs lab

By DJ Yap

NARCOTICS agents raided an alleged illegal drugs laboratory in Quezon City yesterday and seized 2.72 kilos of suspected ketamine and several grams of shabu or metampethamine hydrochloride.

The alleged mini-laboratory was housed in a three-story apartment unit on Apo Street near Quezon Avenue.

Police arrested Benedict Abellanosa Jr., the caretaker of the apartment unit.

Abellanosa is also supposedly the driver of suspected drug trader Johnson Chua, who rents the unit, according to police.

The Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (Aidsotf) chief Blackjack Aguilar said Chua rents the unit from a certain Lourdes Padilla who is out of the country. Chua is the suspected brains behind the drug laboratory.

Cagayan de Oro lab

Chua is also being linked to the discovery last Monday of a shabu warehouse in Cagayan de Oro City, among other major drug operations, Aguilar added.

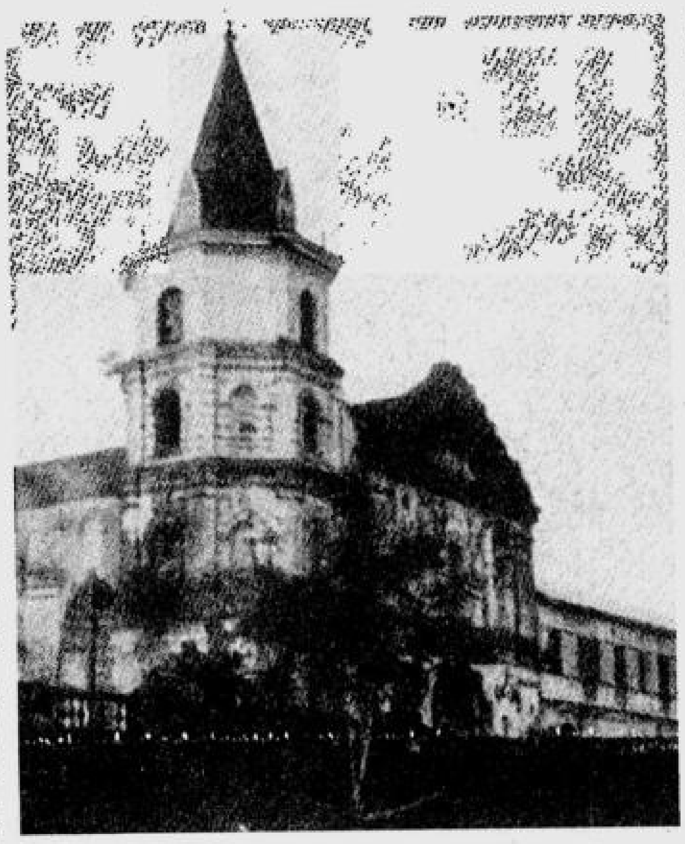
Chua, who is believed to be out of the country, is allegedly the point man in Metro Manila of a major drug syndicate, said Aguilar.

Chief Insp. Ricky Mariano estimated the cost of the suspected ketamine at P6.8 million, while the alleged shabu was pegged at P1.5 million. Drug paraphernalia including glass tooters, aluminum foil and burners were also seized.

Ketamine is an anesthetic drug, but is abused and used in rave parties. According to the United States Alcohol and Drug Information website, solid ketamine is sometimes sold as "Ecstasy."

Aguilar said the apartment had been under surveillance. He added that Quezon City Regional Trial Court Judge Natividad Dizon authorized the search warrant on the unit.

Sta. Ana remembers past on patroness' feast day



THE CHURCH of Sta. Ana in 1905. Built in 1720, it still stands near the town square and is the most prominent structure at the rim of a bustling community. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By Kristina T. Subido
Contributor

ON MAY 12, Sta. Ana will pay homage to its star attraction, its patron saint, *La Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados* or Our Lady of the Abandoned.

The Church of Sta. Ana, which was also a pitstop on the way to another popular pilgrimage site, the Antipolo Shrine, was built in 1720 with funds donated by Manila's Spanish community.

A replica of Our Lady of the Innocents from Valencia, Spain, was installed there.

Then Governor General and Archbishop of Manila Francisco dela Cuesta deposited with the image the crystal scepter symbolic of his command.

The gesture symbolically put the entire country in the care of "La Señora."

Later, another governor general, Juan Jose de Obando, stored what were believed to be authentic relics of St. Anne there.

Catholic Church authorities then decreed that a visit to the relics was worth 80 days of indulgence.

Another 80 days of indulgence was gained if you said the words "Santa Ana, pray for me" with a sincere heart.

In those days, the church stood on high ground surrounded by gardens and tall trees. Its bell tower was topped by a gothic spire.

Tens of thousands of devotees also visited Sta. Ana for the "tanque," or well of healing water at the back of the stone church.

Inside a little "chapel," a door led to a stairway of 21 steps going down to the well.

Visitors came to bathe in or drink the miraculous water.

Native woman

A native woman supervised the rituals. She was so devoted to her sacred duty, she never married. The responsibility was passed on to her unmarried niece.

Foreign visitors were also drawn to this local curiosity.

A souvenir album, circa 1919 and belonging to an American lady, Betty Baird, said the attraction was called "The Miraculous Spring of the Golden Crocodile." (The album was donated to the Intramuros Administration by Maribel Ongpin.)

For presiding over the well, too, the patroness also became known as the *Virgen del Pozo*. Today it is called "The Shrine of the Virgin of the Well."

Though the "tanque" was closed in 1919, many visitors still come to the site.

Chinese devotees of the Virgin of the Well had their own temple built in 1880 right in front of the native chapel.

The *gobernadorcillo* of the Chinese community, Tan Quien-Sen (who took the name Carlos Palanca), bankrolled the project. In those days it was called the Shrine of Sapa, Sapa being the old name of Sta. Ana.

Though Buddhist saints lined the altar, at the very center was the Señora herself.

In those days Sta. Ana was not the highly urbanized part of Manila it now is.

Today, Sta. Ana is a mixed district of schools, banks, markets, new high rises, and genteel homes that line the Pasig River. The ancient grand homes recall an era and way of life long past.

Of the old Sta. Ana, statesman and writer Pedro Paterno once wrote, "She seems to take the form of a dance that kindles the memory. Sitting in the midst of tall trees that seem to vie for the blue heavens, she is called with good reason by Tagalog poets, 'the gate of the land of fortune.'"

3 mayors sued for waste dump

By Blanche S. Rivera

THREE Metro Manila mayors were sued by a lawyers' group yesterday for failing to segregate domestic waste and continuing to operate an open dump in their areas.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, Parañaque City Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr. and Malabon City Mayor Canuto Oreta violated Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, the Philippine Bar Association charged.

In separate complaints filed before the Environmental Ombudsman yesterday, the PBA pressed criminal, administrative and civil charges against the three mayors, the first local government leaders in the region to be charged for violating RA 9003.

"We're sending a message to all public officials to pay attention to their garbage and follow environmental laws… If we can do this to mayors of Metro Manila, we can also do it to the leaders of small towns," PBA chair on environmental laws Antonio Oposa said yesterday.

Proposal to abolish MMDA divides local chief execs

A CLASH of views met a proposal of Makati City Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. to abolish the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza Jr. said, "My fellow mayors were at first hesitant to call for its abolition but (MMDA Chair Bayani) Fernando's recent actions failing to coordinate with mayors has made the situation hopeless."

However, Atienza's claim was contradicted by pronouncements of mayors in the northern part of the metropolis who were unanimous in saying that the MMDA should be retained.

According to Atienza, most of the Metro mayors were getting frustrated at the seeming inaction of the MMDA on problems needing urgent attention like mass transportation and solid waste disposal.

But Caloocan City Mayor Enrico Echiverri said the MMDA had proven itself vital in implementing traffic rules in his locality.

He added, "I don't see the urgency of the abolition."

The mayors are reacting to Locsin's proposal to abolish the MMDA because it had allegedly "divested broad powers" given to mayors.

Locsin is an ally of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay who has been vocal about his objections to the programs of Fernando.

But while Atienza is claiming that "most" mayors are against the MMDA, Malabon Mayor Canuto Oreta said, "I have no problem with the MMDA. I do not know of any move to abolish the agency, but I would not support one."

Valenzuela City Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian said, "I am saddened by all the issues besetting the MMDA and Chair Fernando."

Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco said he would not support any move to get rid of the agency but would want Fernando to respect the authority of local governments.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito said the metropolis needed the MMDA for good management.

Meanwhile, Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzales II was also against abolishing the agency but reiterated his call for Fernando's ouster. *Nancy C. Carvajal, Tina G. Santos and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

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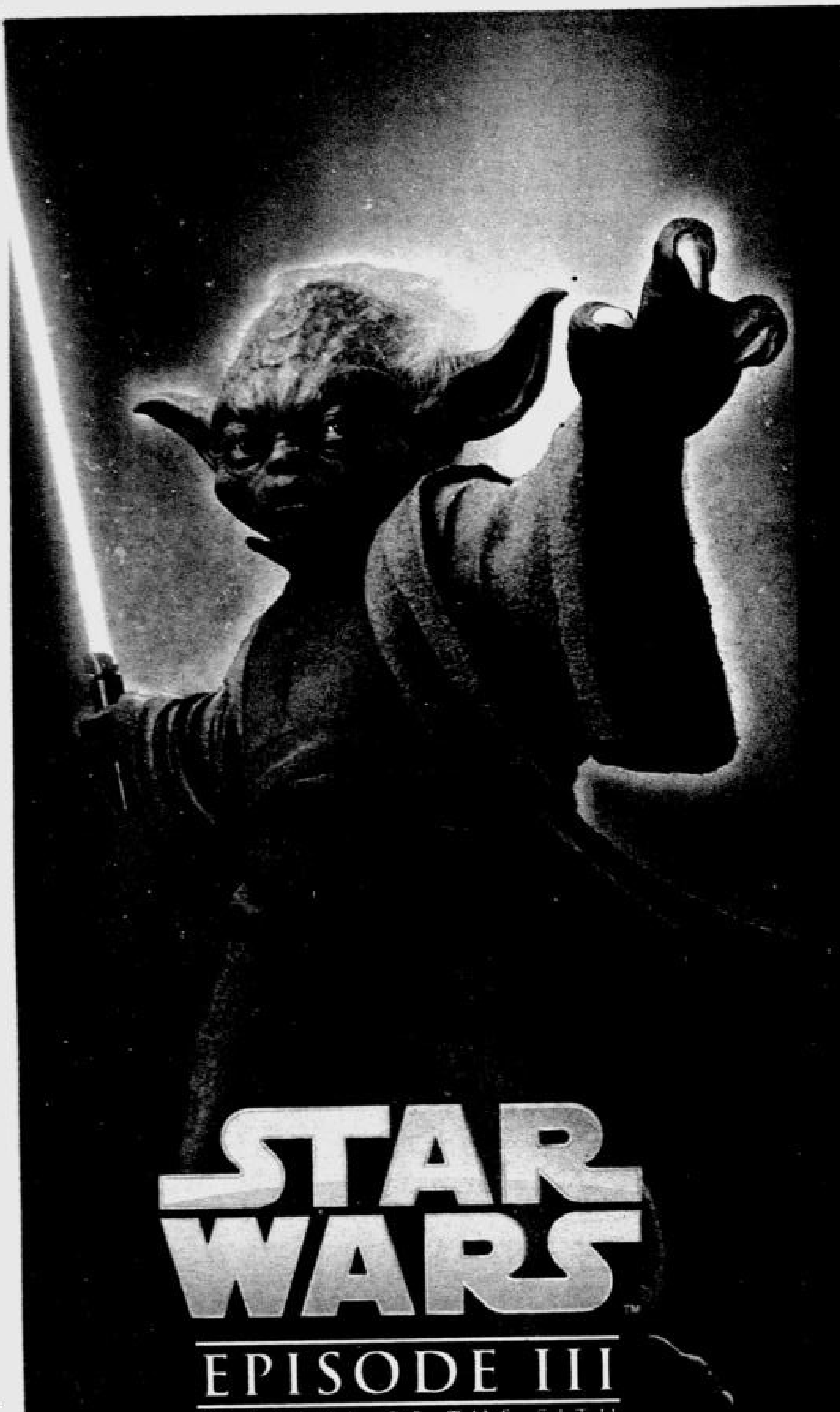

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EPISODE III

REVENGE OF THE SITH

IN THEATRES MAY 19

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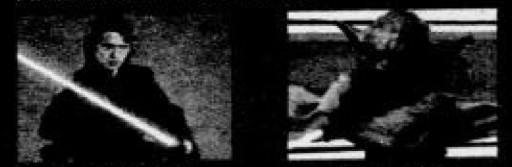

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Peping to BAP: Comply or 'die'

COJUANGCO

By Musong R. Castillo

OLYMPIC Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday threatened to withdraw its recognition of the Basketball Association of the Philippines as the sport's NSA if it reneges on its commitment to the Olympic body's basketball committee.

In a letter to BAP president Quinteliano "Tiny" Literal, Cojuangco asked the amateur caging association to explain why it is repudiating salient aspects of a covenant which the POC forged last month with the BAP and other basketball stakeholders in two summits meant to strengthen the national team.

Cojuangco gave the BAP three days to respond.

"We shall be constrained to initiate sanction on the BAP such as—but not limited to—the withdrawal of recognition of BAP as the NSA for basketball," Cojuangco warned.

Without POC recognition, the BAP risks a diminution of its standing with the Fiba, the international amateur basketball federation, according to a former official of the Olympic body.

Literal reaffirmed the BAP's "unequivocal support" for the POC program in a statement Sunday, only to sign a resolution, along with the rest of the BAP officers, on Monday turning his back on the basketball committee. He also disowned statement attributed to him and said it was an invention by someone else.

Cojuangco spokesperson Joey Romasanta said the former Tarlac congressman was "relaxed but concerned" when he wrote the letter, just a few hours after learning of the BAP's latest stance in the newspapers.

"Given the proximity of the Seaba [Southeast Asian Basketball Association] tournament and the SEA Games… bickerings and sudden shifts in direction are luxuries that the POC and the country can ill afford," Cojuangco said.

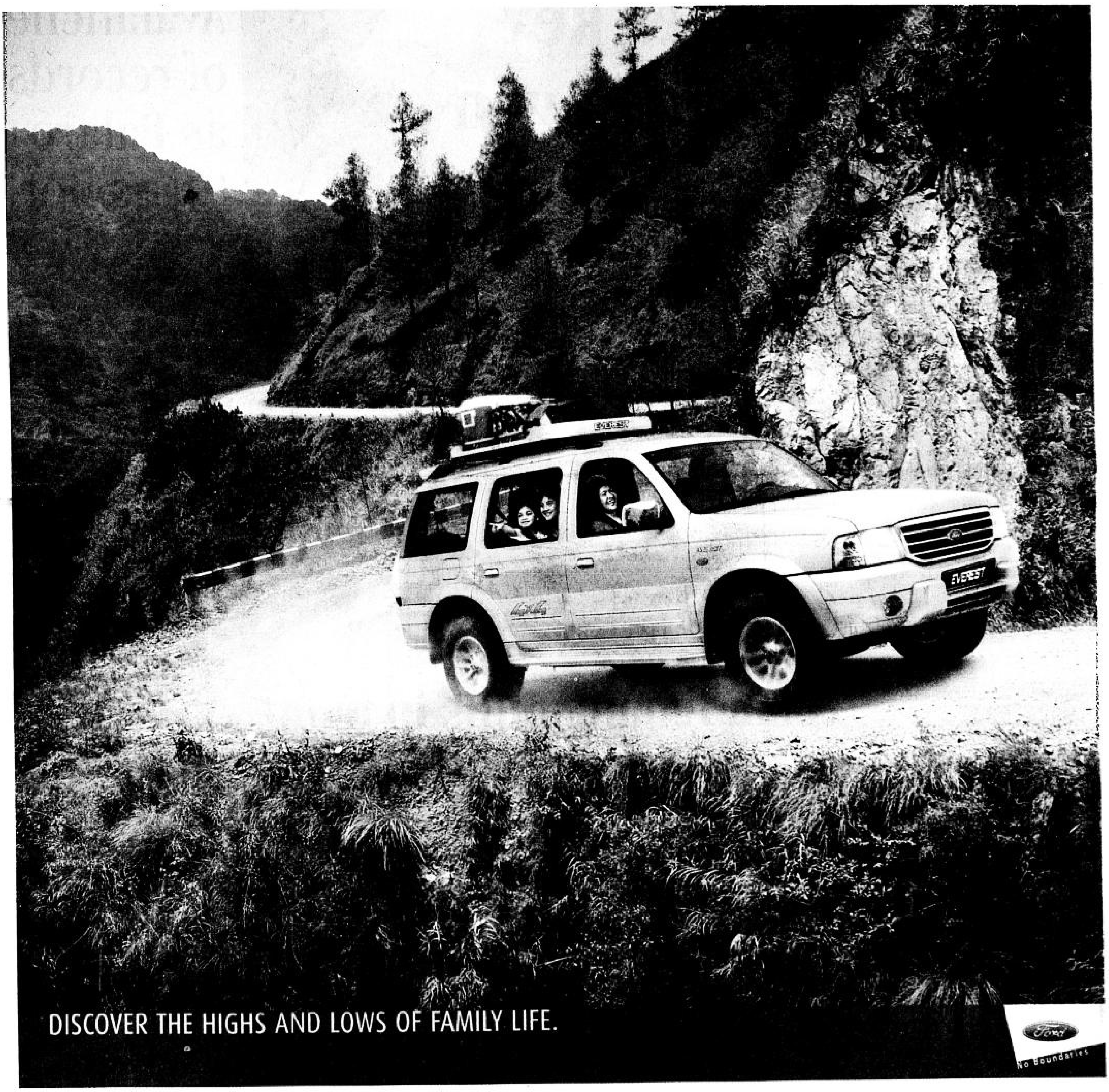
The POC noted that the BAP consented to a resolution during the April 19 and 25 summits calling on the amateur basketball body to "extend its full cooperation to the Working Committee of POC president Cojuangco."

The BAP had raised a howl when the committee opted not to pick its anointed coach, Boyzie Zamar, for the Seaba squad in Singapore.

Members of the BAP batted for Zamar's retention even though its vice-president Christian Tan, director Lito Alvarez and legal counsel Boni Alentajan had agreed to Cojuangco's call to appoint Chot Reyes as the man in charge of the Seaba squad.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Basketball Association will rethink its position with regards to the

PEPING/ A26



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Mark Joseph Cadion, Cavite
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Magic Sing

Carlito Larga, Antipolo City
1 Carton of 1L Petron Touring

Marites Tenorio, Trece Martirez City
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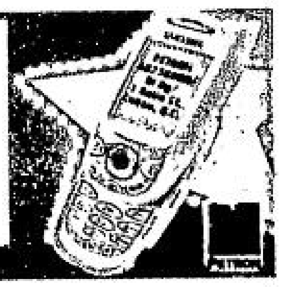


Sydney Kings paid $10,000?

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

FOR a while there, RP coach Chot Reyes had some anxious moments. He was on pins and needles all day Sunday waiting for the call which would inform him if the suspended Fil-Ams were playing in the PBA pocket tournament or not.

Chot heaved a long sigh of relief when the call finally came through close to midnight.

"Tony de la Cruz just called. They're all playing. They decided correctly," read the text message sent to me by Chot a minute or two past midnight, Monday.

Oh well, all's well that ends well. Too bad the two-day series wasn't shown on television. It was a good series, with the Sydney Kings of Australia giving a good account of themselves.

By the way, is it true that these guys were paid an appearance fee of $10,000?

* * *

Talk 'N Text governor Ricky Vargas is inclined to go along with the Fil-Ams' line of thinking. Ricky said he could not comprehend how suspended cagers are allowed to play with the RP team formed by the PBA which "suspends them from playing in the conference, even as an administrative matter as stated."

"I am at a loss for words," he added, "to describe such inconsistent application of rules, and clueless on its logic. Then does this also mean that Asi, who was suspended, can play for the national team? For he is Filipino as he has proven for the nth time."

Ricky believes PBA commissioner Noli Eala has missed out on an opportunity to put an end to an issue that continues to divide the league and has instead further fueled the controversy.

"It's high time that an owners meeting be convened," Ricky said.

* * *

PBA chair Buddy Encarnado, whose team is on a roll, doesn't mind sharing the magic formula of the Santa Lucia Realtors' fine performance in this conference.

"The key here is that we were able to change the players' mindset in more ways than one. For example, instead of being offense oriented, they are now more focused on defense."

The "new" Realtors, according to Buddy, are the exact opposite of how people used to describe the team before—slow and listless.

"As you can see, the players are now spirited, energetic and hardworking. *Tumatakbo at dumidepensa*," said Buddy.

Starter or third stringer, Buddy said each player is aware that anybody can be a superstar in any given game.

But there are other factors that have contributed to the Realtors' transformation. Constant dialogue, bonding and management support are just some of them, according to Buddy.

* * *

According to the BAP's duly designated spokesperson and legal counsel Boni Alentajan, Tiny Literal was hoodwinked into signing the press statement prepared by erstwhile project director Go Teng Kok which said that the BAP president was supporting the POC's program for basketball.

"GTK and one of his cohorts had prompted him to sign the document without the benefit of his reading glasses. They only dictated the contents of the document to Tiny," said Alentajan.

Because of this and GTK's many other sins against the BAP, the board has terminated his appointment as project director for the 2007 FIBA-Asia.

"I advise him to concentrate on his PATAFA instead," Boni said.

* * *

Most of you probably don't remember or even know that movie actor Romy Diaz, who passed away at the Kidney Center yesterday, was a basketball player in his younger days. "A genuine talent," in the words of no less than The Maestro himself, Baby Dalupan, his coach at Crispa.

I vaguely remember Romy as a good shooter but his peers say he was an all-around cager, one of the best in fact, although he never made it to the national squad. He is best known as a member of FEU's Magnificent 7 which included the late Boy Arazas, Turo Valenzona, Oscar Lopez, brothers Josefino and Joselino Roa and Doming Legaspi.

Romy died of tongue cancer at age 64.

Malarayat ready for 89th RP Open

ANGELO Que leads the Filipino charge.

LIPA CITY—The Club Malarayat Complex here has been spruced up to perfect championship shape, ready to give Asia's best and the rest of the elite 156-player field seeing action in the 89th Philippine Open a tough test.

The fairways of the Mount Makulot and Mount Lubo nines have been manicured to pristine condition, with the roughs grown to a length that would punish errant drives.

Most of the fairways have been narrowed after the exclusive club's ground crew put a first cut of rough for the $200,000 event. The composite layout has also been stretched to a length close to 7,000 yards.

The greens will play fast and pins will be placed in spots where the course's defenses are at their strongest. Scores are not expected to go low, especially if the winds blow during the May 19-22 tournament serving as a leg of the Asian Tour.

A representative from the Asian Tour's technical committee gave the course the thumbs-up recently, pronouncing the site fit for world-class play.

"This will be a memorable Open for everyone, not only because we are playing in a world-class course but because of the hospitality they will get from the Malarayat staff," said Malarayat president Antonio Turalba Sr.

Asia's oldest golf championship, held under the auspices of the National Golf Association of the Philippines, has drawn the finest players in the region, including Thai veteran Boonchu Ruangkit and homegrown hope Angelo Que, hero of the Asian Tour team's victory over the Japanese team in the recent Dynasty Cup.

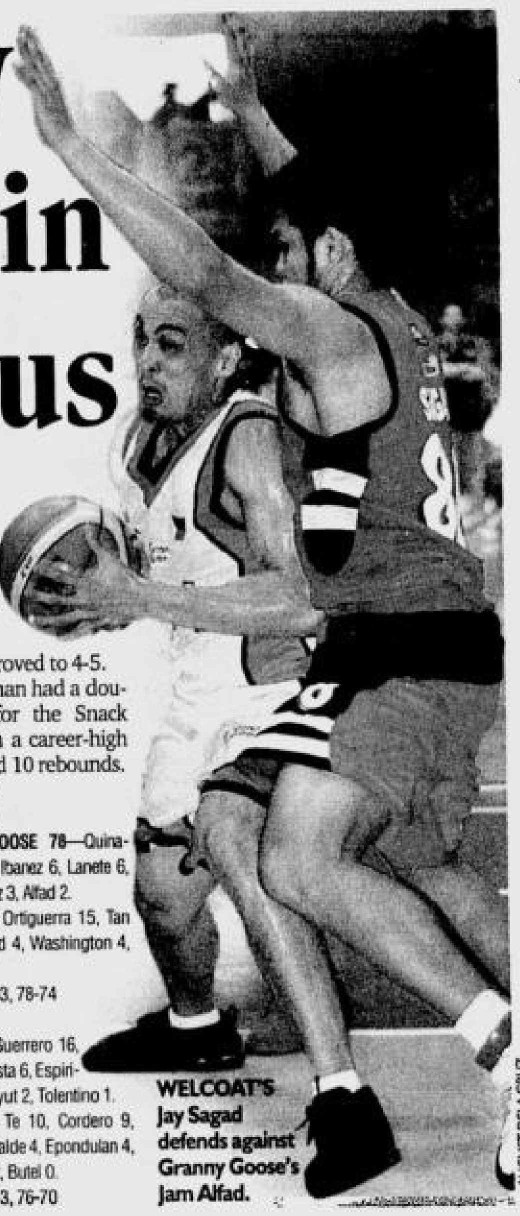
The event dangling a winner's purse of $24,000 was originally scheduled in February. It was moved back so it can fit in the calendar of the Asian Tour.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo will hit one of the ceremonial drives to open the 89th year of the championship presented by Philippine Airlines, ICTSI and San Miguel Corp. and backed by the Hanjin Group, Pagcor, Aboitiz Group of Companies, Petron, PCSO and the Department of Tourism, with the Lipa City Hotel as the official residence.

A Celebrity Pro-Am, where three amateurs will be paired with a professional to form a team, will start off hostilities on May 18. Organizers said the awarding ceremonies and the raffle will be one of the grandest in the history of the Open.

Meanwhile, the qualifying round for the tournament started yesterday at the Villamor Golf Club with close to 100 players contesting the 20 Open berths for Filipinos. The 54-hole qualifier ends Thursday.

Triples key Montaña win over Bacchus



WELCOAT'S Jay Sagad defends against Granny Goose's Jam Alfad.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By Musong R. Castillo

MONTAÑA Pawnshop hit five straight triples in one crucial span in the fourth quarter yesterday to complete a come-from-behind 76-70 victory over Bacchus and put a foot inside the PBL Unity Cup semifinals.

Eric dela Cuesta and Paul Guerrero each scored two treys in that torrid stretch as the Jewels turned a five-point deficit into a 10-point lead going into the final four minutes of the encounter at the Pasig Sports Center.

It was the eighth victory in nine games for Montaña, which had ace Alex Compton watching from the bench for the second straight game because of a right ankle sprain.

The win put the Jewels within another win of an outright seat in the Final Four phase, while dealing Bacchus its seventh loss in nine outings and shoving the Energy Drinks closer to elimination.

Granny Goose moved firmly inside the magic circle of six teams earlier with a 78-74 upset of Welcoat. The Snack Masters improved to 4-5.

JR Quiñahan had a double-double for the Snack masters with a career-high 27 points and 10 rebounds.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Pasig Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Magnolia vs. Nenaco-San Beda
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs. Harbour Centre

The scores:

First Game

GRANNY GOOSE 78—Quinahan 27, Concha 12, Saladaga 8, Ibanez 6, Lanete 6, David 5, Latorio 5, Almeda 4, Cruz 3, Alfad 2.

WELCOAT 74—Najorda 16, Ortiguerra 15, Tan 15, Orbeta 12, Coching 6, Sagad 4, Washington 4, Reyes 2, Guevarra 0, Dy 0.

Quarters: 24-18, 38-35, 54-53, 78-74

Second Game

MONTAÑA 76—Capuz 20, Guerrero 16, Salvador 10, Juntilla 9, Dela Cuesta 6, Espiritu 6, Mercado 4, Vergara 2, Baluyut 2, Tolentino 1.

BACCHUS 70—Abadia 15, Te 10, Cordero 9, Cruz 8, Holper 7, , Menor 5, Hubalde 4, Epondulan 4, Vizcarra 3, Nallon 3, Coyukang 2, Butel 0.

Quarters: 14-16, 30-all, 49-43, 76-70

Avalanche of records as Palaro turns hot

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ILOILO CITY—Records fell, temperature soared and complaints abounded on Day 2 of the Palarong Pambansa here.

Ryan Arabejo led the National Capital Region assault in record-breaking fashion by topping the boys' secondary 400m freestyle at the start of the swimming competitions, even as fellow Big City bet Sonny Boy Tartana set a new mark in the elementary boys' discus throw.

The 15-year-old Arabejo timed four minutes 8.36 seconds to rip the old mark of 4:11.79 set by Carlo Piccio in 1998. So dominant was Arabejo he finished 16 seconds ahead of second placer Nikita Decera of Central Mindanao.

"I was expecting to break the record," said the national developmental team member who sizzled in pool waters heated by the 40-degree temperature inside the Iloilo Sports Complex. The water became too hot that some parents requested that ice cubes be poured into the pool for the afternoon finals.

The games' medical team reported at least 50 cases of illnesses or injuries attributed to the heat. Young cagers, playing on the hot concrete court in front of the stadium, get out only of a room when coaches field them in.

Tartana also broke the meet record in winning the elementary boys' discus throw with a distance of 36.12m, surpassing the 36.04m effort of Alejandro Lonzaga of Region 11 in the 2003 Tubod Palaro. Angelo Azarraga of Caraga Region wound up second with 34.10m.

Late Monday, Richard Maulion became the first record breaker of the event when he won the elementary boys' triple jump by clearing 12.48m. It beat the 12.47m mark posted by Jeffrey Anosa two years ago in Naga City. Maulion defeated NCR's Crispin Torencio (11.20m).

Sharing the limelight with Arabejo was fellow NCR tanker Ammad Yahcob Hassan who ruled the boys' elementary 200m freestyle, beating Calabarzon's Enrico Martin Comendador. The 11-year-old Hassan clocked 2:19.80 to take the gold.

Western Visayas also made a splash in the pool with Tia Lacson of Bacolod City taking the girls' secondary 400m free gold in 4:43.55, beating the 4:55.67 of Arabejo's sister Marinela.

Calabarzon's Clair Adorna clinched the girls' elementary 200m free with a time of 2:26.76.

ISLAND PARADISE RACE

Team Iguana pulls in front

By Jasmine W. Payo

BAYOMBONG—Team Iguana bucked tire troubles navigating through this bustling Nueva Vizcaya town Monday night to grab the overall lead on Day 3 of the Island Paradise Adventure Race.

Andrew Chinalpan Jr., Orville Bernabe and Dennis Ararao maneuvered their orange Nissan Frontier to the front of the 15-vehicle caravan with just six demerit points in the P1-million challenge.

"Since the start of the race, we had to change our tires three times already," said Chinalpan, noting the rough terrain in the nine-day adventure rally.

The seasoned racers remained seven points ahead of Honda Blazers' JC Leviste, Marc Leviste and model Illac Diaz, who had 13 demerit points in their silver Honda CRV.

Two teams tied for third place with 15 demerit points. Driving a Ford Ranger, top triathlete Nonoy Jopson, Niño Abarquez and Joaquin Moras of Edge shared the spot with Team Pasaway, composed of husband and wife Jess and Rowie Zamora and friend Nel Marcelino in a Mitsubishi Strada.

Team Iguana said, however, that no team can claim a comfortable lead in the grueling 2,000-km Luzon leg.

"It's still a long race so it's hard to say," said Chinalpan. "In just one day, you can go from number one to last. It's just a matter of one problem like having an engine trouble or flat tire."

But Chinalpan, who ruled the recent AXN Manila challenge, took pride in Iguana's teamwork.

"We're actually a ragtag team," said the 31-year-old racer. "We're first-time teammates."

Organized by the Department of Tourism, the third stage flagged off in front of Banaue Hotel in Ifugao. Racers trekked for four hours in Batad, Ifugao, a 3,700-foot peak. They also competed in other tasks including moma-chewing and a shopping challenge in Ifugao and buko pie-eating in Bayombong.

Conducted for the first time on the national level, participants must drive through different destinations at a prescribed time and finish various physical and mental challenges along the way.

RACING TIPS

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Race 1—1. Medal's Time 2. Kambro 3. Besame Mucho 4. Rindy

Race 2—1. Close Account 2. Zero Gravity 3. Silver Eagle 4. Master Kenneth 5. Feng Shui

Race 3—1. Court General 2. My Sheikh 3. Flying Strike 4. Dazzling Affair

Race 4—1. Bella Firenze 2. Xtreme Heat 3. Speed Admiral 4. Max's Princess 5. Perky Perp/Blue Sheikh

Race 5—1. Noble Win 2. Noble Principality 3. Mini Skirt 4. Premiere Event

Race 6—1. Latin Music 2. Valid Hazm 3. He's So Lucky 4. Number Satu 5. Morning Glory 6. Lady Be Gold

Race 7—1. Amazing Firenze 2. Dow Jones 3. Tervalac 4. Silver Place

Race 8—1. Hazagone Babes 2. Western Dancer 3. Holy Smoke 4. Manila Slew 5. Milled Forever 6. Demolition Jack

RP, Sri Lanka duel ends in draw

THE PHILIPPINES split its assignment against the Amateur Boxing Association of Sri Lanka in their dual meet in Colombo last weekend. Three Filipinas and two men's campaigners prevailed over their Sri Lankan counterparts while five others, including a woman pug, lost their bouts. Emerging winners were pinweight Analiza Cruz, flyweight Alice Kate Aparri and light bantamweight Annie Albania in the women's card and light flyweight Albert Pabila and light welterweight Florencio Ferrer Jr. in the men's division. Bowing to their Sri Lankan rivals were light flyweight Josie Gabuco, flyweight Junel Cantancio, bantamweight Rolando Magbanua Jr., featherweight Francis Cutamora and lightweight Genebert Basadre. "It was a good result," said Abap president Manny Lopez.

Peping to POC . . .

From page A25

league's participation in the formation of the Seaba squad.

"We want to be part of the solution, not the problem," PBA chair Buddy Encarnado said yesterday.

In a related development, athletics and chess chief Go Teng Kok denied the BAP's allegations that he had forced Literal to issue "false and misleading statements to the media."

"No one forced him to sign that document," said Go, adding that Literal signed the letter of support to the POC last Sunday in the presence of the BAP head's son at The Mandarin hotel in Makati.

Department of Tourism's ISLAND PARADISE ADVENTURE RACE

OVERALL STANDINGS • END OF LEG 3 • BANAUE – BAYOMBONG • MAY 9

TOBY'S PITMAN Demerits: 60
DA PAYATOTS Demerits: 27
MP TURBO Demerits: 27
CEBU BLACK SHAMA Demerits: 26
TEAM TRIBU (DAVAO TEAM) Demerits: 24
TOYOTA HILUX ALL TERRAIN Demerits: 24
NOMADS – CONQUEROR Demerits: 23
THIRD WORLD OUTDOOR-SHELL Demerits: 20
HABAGAT – SHELL Demerits: 16
SIDEWAYS Demerits: 16
PASAWAY Demerits: 15
TEAM VUDU AUDIONET (EDGE) Demerits: 15
HONDA BLAZERS Demerits: 13
IGUANA Demerits: 6

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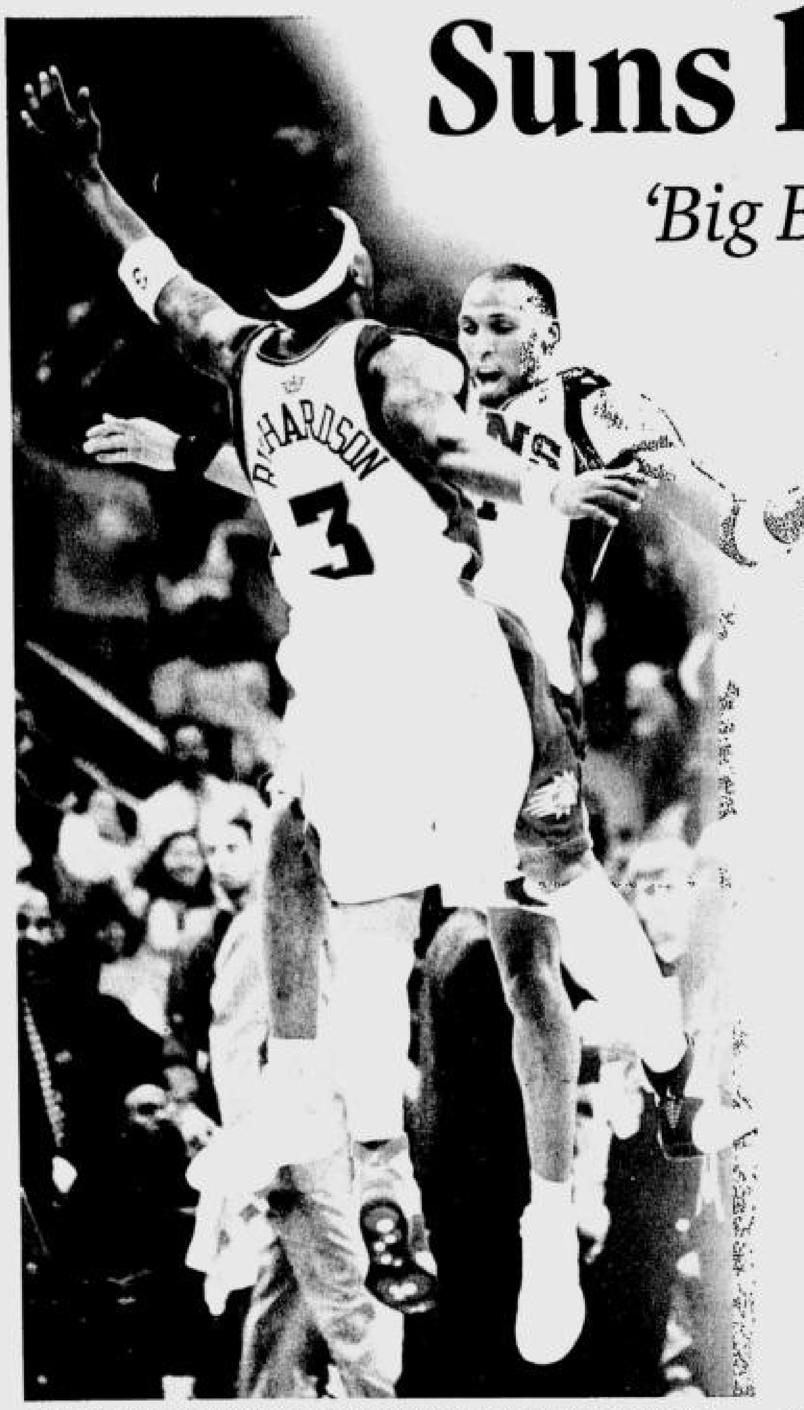
Eastwood City
EZ MAP

Suns leave Mavs gasping

'Big Ben' Wallace powers Pistons past Pacers



SHAWN Marion (right) and Quentin Richardson celebrate Phoenix's win. AFP

PHOENIX, Arizona—Amare Stoudemire scored 25 of his 40 points in the first half as Phoenix ran Dallas ragged in a 127-102 rout in their NBA quarterfinal series Monday.

In Detroit, Michigan, Ben Wallace set the tone at both ends of the court as Detroit breezed to a 96-81 win over Indiana in the opening game of their playoff series.

The floor general of the high-flying Suns, Steve Nash became just the second point guard in 40 years to win the prestigious most valuable player award Sunday. The Canadian was honored before the game in front of his former teammates.

"Everyone was really hungry and eager to get back out here," Nash said. "We needed a win.

"It feels great. It capped off a difficult weekend. It was nice winning the award but there is a lot of things that goes with it. There was a lot of emotion playing against my former team."

Stoudemire, who finished 10th in MVP voting, was an unstoppable force from the outset, proving far too quick for both Erick Dampier and Dirk Nowitzki.

In the first half, Stoudemire made 8-of-15 shots and went 9-of-11 at the free-throw line as the Suns built a 63-47 lead.

Stoudemire finished 13-of-21 from the floor and 14-of-17 at the line while also collecting 16 rebounds in the best playoff game of his career.

"They ran on us and they played like they played during first round and regular season," Dallas coach Avery Johnson said. "I am very disappointed with our approach to the game.

"Now we know what we are up against. I guarantee you we will have a better effort in game two. It is my responsibility to get my team ready. So you can blame me for this one."

STOUDEMIRE: Huge game REUTERS

Nowitzki had 28 points and 13 rebounds for the Mavericks, who shot 45 percent (44-of-98) and went just 5-of-18 from the arc.

Johnson was ejected with 3:20 remaining left in the third quarter after picking up a pair of technical fouls.

Johnson suffered an embarrassing moment when he came rushing onto the court to protest a call and slipped, falling hard on his back.

Johnson joked about his slip-up after the game.

"I have had lots of embarrassing moments in my career," Johnson said. "I was going to be the sixth man. I was out there trying to play defense but you can't play defense in these shoes. You got to have on basketball shoes.

The Pistons and the Pacers were meeting for the third time here since the Nov. 19 brawl that saw Indiana players fighting with Detroit fans.

The ugly incident led to a season-long suspension for Indiana's Ron Artest and lengthy bans for his teammates Jermaine O'Neal and Stephen Jackson. Both Jackson and O'Neal are playing in this series but Artest is still suspended.

With no incidents in this one, the Pacers had no answer for Wallace, who again was a surprise offensive force while also controlling the backboards.

He had 14 points and 11 rebounds in the first half, helping the Pistons build a 52-38 lead.

"My plan was just to attack the basket," Wallace said. "In the past when we played them, they haven't really guarded me, so I wanted to force them to guard me tonight."

The NBA's Defensive Player of the Year, Wallace finished with 21 points, 15 rebounds and four steals.

It marked the second big offensive game of the playoffs for Wallace, who averaged just 9.7 points in the regular season. He scored 29 points in game three against Philadelphia in the first round.

Richard Hamilton scored 28 points to lead the second-seeded Pistons, who led by double digits the entire second half.

Detroit also got things done with its signature defense, holding Indiana without a basket for more than six minutes during one stretch in the second half.

"I thought Ben Wallace really dominated a lot of the activity in this game and he set an unbelievable tone," Indiana coach Rick Carlisle.

"He had us on our heels all night, and we've got to find a way to put a body on him."

"I think tonight we really thrived off of our crowd," Hamilton said. "We defended inside and we helped each other out on the defensive end."

AFP

Two teams get stars back; Sydney trips RP

STANDINGS	W	L
Talk 'N Text	9	4
Alaska	8	5
San Miguel	8	5
Sta. Lucia	7	7
Red Bull	6	7
Purefoods	6	7
FedEx	6	7
Shell	6	8
Coca-Cola	5	8
Brgy. Ginebra	5	8

Games Today
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:45 p.m.—Alaska vs Red Bull
7:35 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Purefoods

IT WAS like they were never gone.

Before Alaska and Purefoods ever felt the absence of key players that would have crippled their bids, the two teams will get them back in the ongoing Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference for today's game at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Aces, who would have missed Jeffrey Cariaso, Sonny Thoss, Mike Cortez and four other role players, will have them back in their 4:45 p.m. match against Red Bull.

Alaska is shooting for solo second, hoping to clinch its ninth win in 14 games when it faces the Barako.

Purefoods, buoyed by an out-of-town victory over Ginebra that pulled it a game away from last place, tackles Talk 'N Text at 7:35 p.m. with Noy Castillo back in the active list.

Castillo, Cariaso, Thoss, Cortez and Alaska reserves Eugene Tejada, Rob Johnson and Willy Wilson were all cleared after they submitted the documents required of them by the PBA board of governors.

Also cleared yesterday was San Miguel's Dorian Peña.

The Beermen, who play tomorrow in Lucena City, are also expecting flamboyant forward Danny Seigle as the 6-foot-6 scorer just needs to validate his papers before submitting them to the league.

Shell's Tony dela Cruz is also just one document shy of getting his suspension lifted and expects to be cleared before the Turbo Chargers play on Friday.

The players were part of a 20-strong group of Fil-Ams suspended by the league for failing to submit the new requirements required by the board to authenticate their Filipino citizenship.

Jimmy Alapag still hasn't submitted his documents at presstime, making him a doubtful starter today. The Phone Pals will thus rely on Willie Miller and import Jerald Honeycutt to get the job done against the Hotdogs.

Meanwhile, the Sydney Kings downed the RP Team-Supremo Cane Vinegar, 104-91, last night to sweep their two games against the national pool at the Philsports. The Aussies bested RP Team-San Mig Coffee, 63-59, Monday night.

Francis Ochoa

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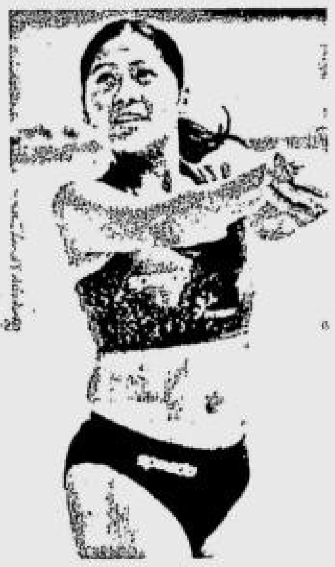
Defending champs head Petron field

THE SECOND leg of the 2005 Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball tournament kicks off May 15 and 16, drawing an eclectic mix of lady spikers to the Clearwater Country Club in Clarkfield, Pampanga.

Last year's champions Michelle Laborte and Cecille Tabuena of the Philippine Navy lead the 20-player cast of the two-day volleyball festival sponsored by Petron and organized by the Voltz Management Group headed by Tisha Abundo, former Commissioner of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC).



GENEVIEVE Lanuevo leads the PATTS College of Aeronautics.

Tabuena and Laborte, actually took part in the first leg of the tournament, also at the Clearwater Country Club, but showed up with different partners in the series also backed by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Pagcor and Toyota Pasong Tamo.

Speedo is the volleyfest's official outfitter while Mikasa is the official ball. The finals will be telecast on NBN-4 on a delayed basis courtesy of ALC Productions and Visible Video.

Tabuena and Labrorte proved to be no match against the eventual Philippine Army champion tandem of Jennifer Bohawe and Patricia Siatan in the first leg.

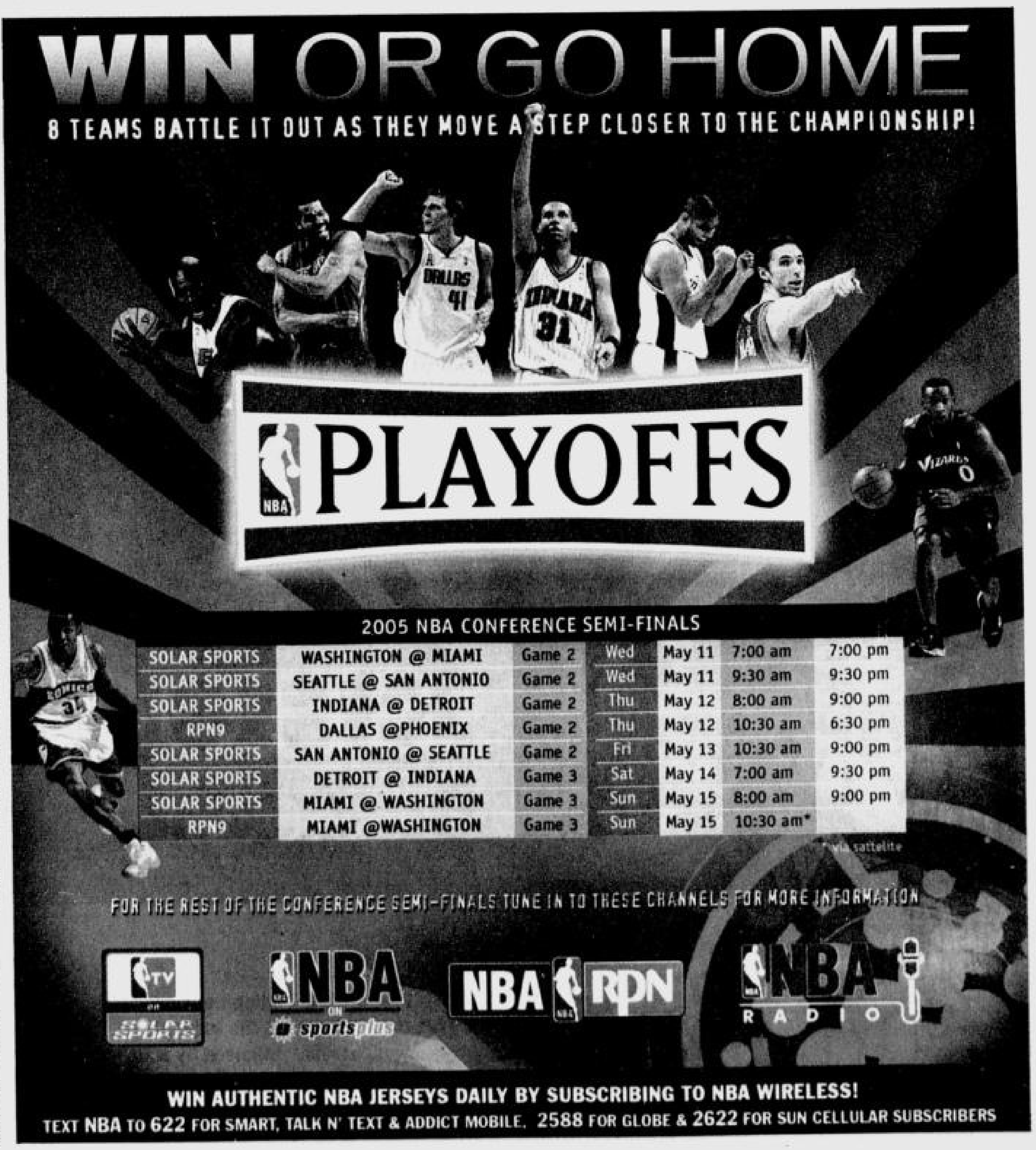
"Tabuena and Laborte are certainly itching to be back in the hunt," said Abundo.

Joining Tabuena and Laborte in the field are Erika Tiamzon and Rolyn Marquicias, Joan Carpio and Monica Aleta, Cecille Chavaz and Ailyn Ege, Joy Ongray and Liza Roxas, Acelyn Dubiao and Mari Micah Mariano, Ingrid Berayo and Joyce Ann Realeza, Diane Destajo and Jennifer Halos, Genevieve and Jennifer Lanuevo, Jackie Ann Montefrio and Lou Maranon.

Spring tests Cavite

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna Spring tries to end a two-game skid today when it plays debuting Cavite in the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championship at the San Luis Sports Complex.

The Laguna team of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro, hopes to bounce back in the 6 p.m. contest. against the Far Eastern Insurance-backed Insurers of Bacoor vice mayor Edwin Malvar and Gov. Ireneo "Ayong" Maliksi, who are out to make an impressive debut.



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SOLAR SPORTS	SEATTLE @ SAN ANTONIO	Game 2	Wed	May 11	9:30 am	9:30 pm
SOLAR SPORTS	INDIANA @ DETROIT	Game 2	Thu	May 12	8:00 am	9:00 pm
RPN9	DALLAS @PHOENIX	Game 2	Thu	May 12	10:30 am	6:30 pm
SOLAR SPORTS	SAN ANTONIO @ SEATTLE	Game 2	Fri	May 13	10:30 am	9:00 pm
SOLAR SPORTS	DETROIT @ INDIANA	Game 3	Sat	May 14	7:00 am	9:30 pm
SOLAR SPORTS	MIAMI @ WASHINGTON	Game 3	Sun	May 15	8:00 am	9:00 pm
RPN9	MIAMI @WASHINGTON	Game 3	Sun	May 15	10:30 am*	

* via sattelite
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Cebu kicks off dry runs for 7 SEA Games events

FOR Cebu, there's no substitute for actual competitions to test its readiness to co-host the 2005 Southeast Asian Games from Nov. 27-Dec. 5.

The Cebu Southeast Asian Games Organizing committee (Cebusoc) recently held the National Individual Judo Championships and Battle of Champions at the Grand Ballroom of the Cebu City Waterfront Hotel to usher a series of dry runs for the seven SEAG events it will be hosting.

Other events slated in Cebu are mountain-bike in Danao City, pencak silat and karate at the Mandaue City Sports and Cultural Center, dancesport (Waterfront), taekwondo (New Cebu Coliseum) and sepak takraw (University of San Carlos Gym).

The three-day judo competition, which served as a pre-SEA Games event meant to draw interest for the sport and determine the readiness of Cebu as SEA Games provincial hub, was dominated by members of the national team led by six-time SEAG champion John Baylon.

Baylon and fellow national team member Estie Gay Liwanen emerged champions of the men's and women's competitions which started at the University of San Carlos Gym and ended at the Waterfront Hotel's Grand Ballroom.

"After judo, we will be holding six more pre-SEA Games activities that will serve as part of our preparation for the hosting job," said chair Jonathan Guardo of the Cebusoc, the working committee tasked to oversee Cebu's hosting preparation. "It's important to determine the problems this early so that we'd be able to avoid them come the real big time."

Leading the works for Mandaue is city sports chief Cheryl Ouano while Boying Rodriguez is spearheading Danao City's SEAG drive.

BATTLE of Champions winners John Baylon and Estie Gay Liwanen (third and fifth from left) with San Miguel Corp.'s Peter Martin (center), judo president Reynaldo Jaylo and host Jonathan Guardo (1st and 2nd from right) and Japanese guests during the awarding ceremony at the Cebu City Waterfront Hotel's Grand Ballroom.

SPORTSWATCH

Custodio jr tennis double titlist

VIGAN—JV Custodio whipped Ericka Lagura, 6-3, 6-2, in the girls' 12-under then blanked Monique Rafael, 6-0, 6-0, in the girls' 14-under division to become a double titlist at the close of the 2005 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and regional workshop here at the Vigan tennis club. Custodio shared the limelight with Lagura, who redeemed herself in the unisex 10-under with a 6-1, 6-0 victory over Coby Rafael; Stephen Chua, a 6-0, 6-0 winner over Rafael in the boys' 12-under; Jarro Aga, who routed Martbart Eugenio, 6-0, 6-0, in the boys' 14-under. Patrick Arevalo bested Reymond Padigos, 6-1, 7-5, in the boys' 16-under but Padigos turned the tables around Arevalo in the boys' 18-under following a 7-5, 1-6, 7-6 win in the netfest.

Barkadahan derby 2nd round today

PASAY Cockpit's "Barkadahan 5—Cock Derby" which opened Monday night before a big crowd, enters it's second round today with more than 60 matches. Sponsors are Sagupaan Complexor 3000 and Casino Filipino—Silahis. The derby stakes a cash prize of P1 million for an entry fee of P8,800. So far, eight entries are assured of finals berths after posting two victories apiece last Monday. These were Fatman (Pepito Ngo), Windbreaker (Tony Marfori), Balahura (Mr. Panopio), Greenwood (Jake Macasaet), WTJ Makati Col. (Lito Orillaza), WTJ San Gabriel (Madison Go), AS Calinawan (ASF Group) and June 10 Sa Pasay (Joel Fernando). All qualifiers will face one another on Friday for the championship.

Air Assault 6-cocker at Roligon

LEADING cockers from the provinces gird up for the "EYB Air Assault 6—Cock Derby" on Saturday at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. Champion gamebirds will be fielded by Wakee Salud of Cebu, Bebot Uy and Dorie Du of Davao, Rep. Elmer Codilla of Ormoc, Chito Tinsay of Iloilo, Eming Subla and Nelson Uy of Isabela, Otic Geroso, Nato Lacson, Dante Hinlo and Arnold Mendoza of Negros, Anthony Anggangco of Pangasinan and Gov. Joson of Nueva Ecija.

The 3-cock eliminations on Saturday will feature more than 60 fights. The second round is on May 16 and finals on May 18. Host of the event are the Ampil and Bacud brothers of Negros Occidental.

JOCKEY Jesse Guce holds his trophy after piloting Hellfire to victory in the European Union Cup held recently at the Santa Ana Park. (From right) second secretary Marcel Van Den Bogaard of the Netherlands, Ambassador Jan de Kok of the European Commission, Javier Gonzalez of Spain, Jerden Vergeylen of Belgium, Ambassador Riitta Resch of Finland, Ulf Walden of Sweden, Phil. Racing Club President Solomon Cua and Benedicte Meyssan of France.

Shakey's V-League opens May 14

SHAKEY'S renews its commitment to help develop women's volleyball and provide the country's top spikers a venue where they could further hone their skills as it stages the third Shakey's V-League on May 14 at the Ateneo Blue Eagle Gym.

The organizing Sports Vision Management Group Inc. (SVMGI) has decided to go back to its original six-team roster, confident of sustaining the gains made by the sport in terms of popularity and acceptance in the first two conferences.

Arch rivals University of Santo Tomas and La Salle, champions of the first two editions of the league sponsored by leading pizza parlor Shakey's, head the cast that includes Lyceum, San Sebastian College, Far Eastern University and another school with a rich sporting tradition.

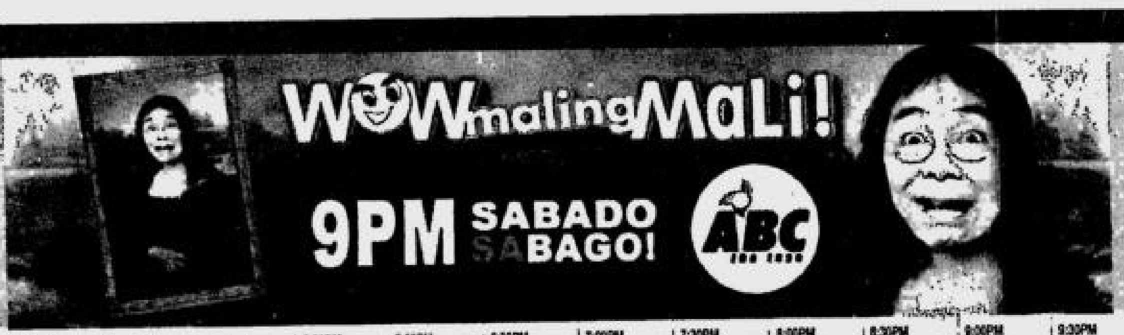
"We always believe in SVMGI's vision, which is to push the sport further and bring back the glory days of women's volleyball," said Vic Gregorio, Shakey's Pizza general manager.

Two games will be played on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays with highlights of the matches during the elims to be aired the following night of each day from 7-8 over IBC Channel 13.

"The fans' response in the first two conferences makes us so proud and inspired to continue staging this event, which we believe is good for Philippine sports," said SVMGI president Emilio "Jun" Bernardino.

The event is backed by IBC-13, Jemah Television, Accel and Mikasa.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Wednesday, May 11, 2005



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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5:10 PM)	Naruto (5:35 PM)	Vidjoking	Qpids	TV Patrol World		Hiram	Spirits	Memories Of Bali	Stained Glass	Yes Yes Show			Insider
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	EZ Shop	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Look Who's Talking	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knockout	Sorcerer Orphen	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Dama	Encantadia (8:45 PM)	All About Eve (9:15 PM)		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Score Tactics	The Ring	First 48 (Hrs)		Trading Spouses		Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Pangako Mo	Cerge For Truth	
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tambayan		Direk	Junior Rayos Report	Bestfriends	Celebrity Single	Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	–
JackTV	Banzai	X-Men	Justice League	Wwe Raw				Filter	Just For Laughs	Mad TV		Dr. Katz	Premium Blend	Chapelle's Show	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Mad TV		The Sib Show	Street Smarts
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Simple Life	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Eliminidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Complete Savages	What I Like About You	Veronica Mars		Last Comic Standing		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Cinema One		Phone				I Will Survive				Dahil Sa Sa Kanya			Persona	Kung Mangarap ka'l Magising				Sakristan Mayor	
Studio 23		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Super Gals	My MYX	Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	C.S.I.			Las Vegas		News Central	Oprah		The Good Life With Cory Quirino
AXN		The Amazing Race 7		Maximum Exposure (Season II)		Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Pensacola (Season III)		Alias (Season II)		The Amazing Race 7		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		Fear Factor (Season V)		CSI: NY (Season I)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol		Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol		Chronicles: News From The Edge				Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Showreel Asia		Taboo		Dangerous Jobs		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wow!/Dogs With Jobs: Keno, Mentor, Prince	Chimp Diaries	About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Showreel Asia		Taboo	
Solar Sports				Kotv Magazine	IBF Thailand Open '05				Women's Volleyball '04				NBA TV Daily	NBA Playoffs Semi-finals Game1					Destination Finals
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special 101 Most Shocking Moments		You're Invited	Life & Style		Style Star	Nigella Bites II	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO			Legal Eagles (3:45 PM)				Cowboy Bebop: The Movie				Daddy Day Care			Bad Boys II					Zoolander (11:20 PM)
Star Movies		Rangers (3:15 PM)				Solaris			Terminator 2: Judgement Day					Windtalkers				Darkman (11:15 PM)	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Mucha Lucha!	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
ESPN	World Tennis Masters '04		2004 Int'l. Volleyball Argentina vs. Australia			In The Driver's Seat	LPGA Golf Michelob Open				Goals!	Sportscenter Asia	Singapore Cup '05 Korea vs. Jordan					2004 Sportvisional Table Tennis Championships	Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	Altered Species			Street Justice: Legacy			Innocent Moves				Cabin Fever			Weekend War			Hideaway		
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Missing		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	Wire In The Blood		Missing		Ruby's Bucket Of Blood			Strong Medicine (10:35 PM)	Hour Asia	Wire In The Blood
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Colour Of War: Victory in Europe		Journey To The Bottom Of The Sea		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery			
Sports Plus				Italia Serie A				Race Title (TBD) Highlights		NBA Playoffs Semi-finals Game1					Bikini Destination	Arena Football: Colorado @ New Orleans			
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Talk Ko 'To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Sinulog Festival				Paco Park Presents	

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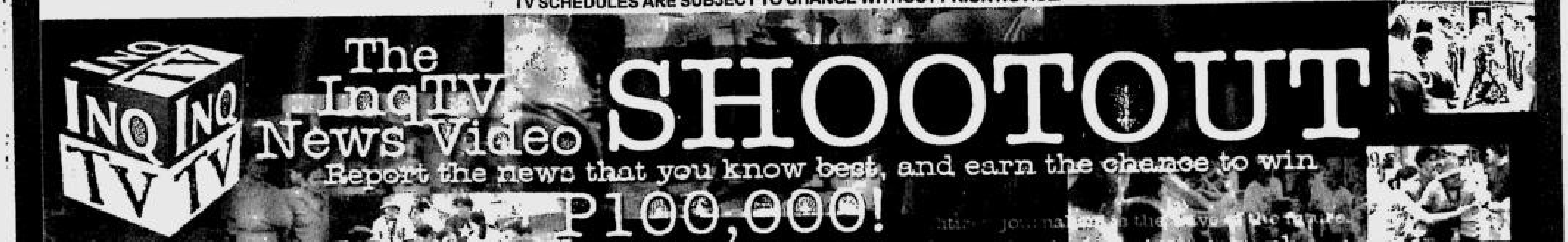

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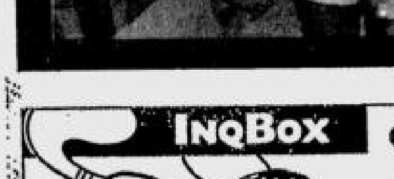

INQBOX

Question of the Week

More than 90 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1986. The Committee to Protect Journalists has identified the Philippines as "the most murderous country for journalists," followed by Iraq, Colombia, Bangladesh and Russia. What should be done to stop the killings?

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Senders of d best 20 texts as publishd in Tuesday's **INQBOX** *wiL each receiv an *Inquirer Mug! U*

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HILTON

TAKE FIVE

Paris H, princess

NEW YORK—For someone with a wilder-than-wild party girl history and a faker-than-fake reality TV show, Paris Hilton is surprisingly real.

In person, what you see—glammed up, glammed down, hair extensions in, hair extensions out—is what you get. The result? Ever-increasing fame for the omnipresent hotel heiress turned sex tape star and reality TV supernova.

Hilton, 24, stars in the horror film, "House of Wax."

Describe your occupation?

I'm an actress, a brand, a businesswoman. I'm all kinds of stuff.

Do you read what's written about you?

I just look at the pictures to see what I was wearing last week and if it was cute.

Do you read blogs?

What's that?

What did you want to be when you were a little girl?

A veterinarian, but then I realized I could just buy a bunch of animals.

You do a lot of kissing in "House of Wax." What was that like?

It was hard. I'd never done anything like that before. My boyfriend—not my boyfriend now (shipping heir Paris Lastis)—got really jealous.

Who do you want to be your new "Simple Life" co-star?

Kim (Stewart, daughter of rocker Rod), but it could be anybody.

Have you spoken to Nicole [Richie] following the big breakup?

No.

What could you possibly do on "Simple Life 4"?

Go to Maui.

Why?

They want to sex it up, have us more in swimsuits.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Married to my boyfriend with two kids and a house. Still acting and doing stuff.

What kind of wife would you be?

A good one. I'd cook and clean.

What would your children's names be?

Paris and London.

Why are you so popular?

I don't know, because of who I am. I'm not like anybody else. I'm like an American princess.

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4 GOLD (DTS) PACIFIER
5 GOLD (DOLBY) AMITYVILL HORROR
6 GOLD (SDDS) KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
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4 WEDDING DATE

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4 (DTS) WEDDING DATE

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2 (DOLBY) WEDDING DATE
3 (DTS) KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 THE INTERPRETER

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1 HIDE AND SEEK
2 CAN THIS BE LOVE
3 (DOLBY) ONG BAK

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
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2 CAN THIS BE LOVE
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4 (DTS) THE PACIFIER

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2 CAN THIS BE LOVE
3 (DOLBY)

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1 (SDDS) KID
2 TAGOS SA LAMAN
3 KIROT SA DIBDIB
4 (DTS) ALONE IN THE DARK

Lianas MovieCity
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1 (DOLBY) THE INTERPRETER
2 CAN THIS BE LOVE
3 (DTS) KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 PARAISO
5 WEDDING DATE

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2 BOGGY MAN
3 (DTS) GUESS WHO
4 (DOLBY) CAN THIS BE LOVE

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2 THE FACIFIER
3 WEDDING DATE
4 CAN THIS BE LOVE

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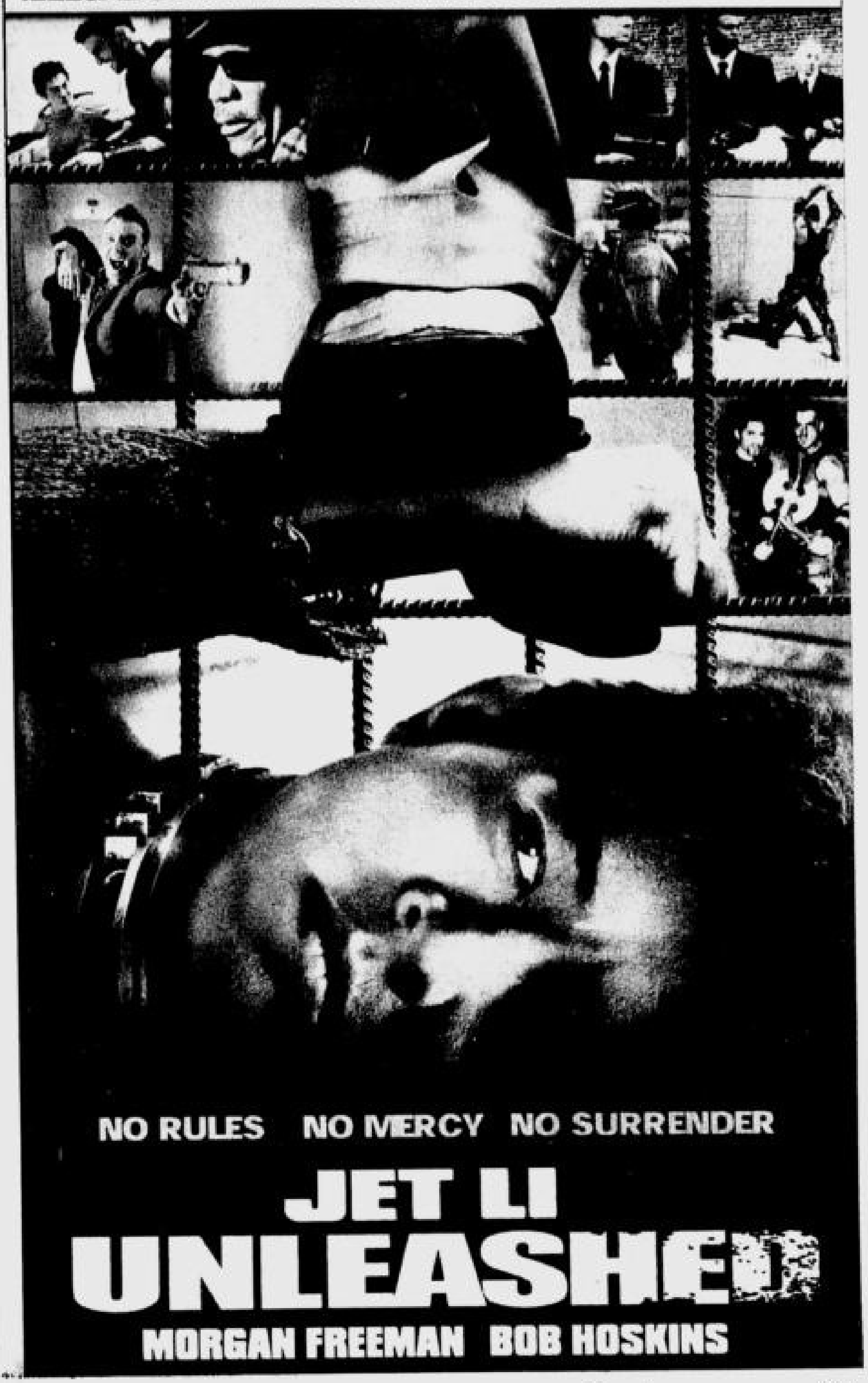

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Ryan Reynolds, Melissa George
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
Orlando Bloom, Liam Neeson
THE WEDDING DATE
Debra Messing, Dermot Mulroney
HOUSE OF WAX
E Cuthbert, C M Murray, P Hilton
XXX 2: STATE OF THE UNION
Ice Cube
CAN THIS BE LOVE
Sandara Park, Hero Angeles
HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
Charlize Theron, Penelope Cruz
GUESS WHO
Bernie Mac, Ashton Kutcher
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
Pre-Opening Screenings - KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ **CAN THIS BE LOVE**
Sandara Park, Hero Angeles
❷ **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**
Orlando Bloom, Liam Neeson
❸ **XXX 2: STATE OF THE UNION**
Ice Cube
❹ **IN GOOD COMPANY**
Dennis Quaid, Topher Grace
❺ **AMITYVILLE HORROR**
Ryan Reynolds, Melissa George
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ARANETA COLISEUM EVENTS
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE May 11
4:45pm Alaska vs. Red Bull / 7:35pm Talk N Text vs Purefoods
THE 'C' SHOW
May 21, Saturday, 8pm
KEVYN LETTAU: MEMORIES OF LOVE
May 14, Saturday, 8pm
ASHANTI LIVE IN MANILA
May 26, Thursday, 8pm

CENTER EVENTS
EXHIBITS — ***The Saturday Group Art Exhibit** featuring the works of the premier artists' group in the country including Mauro "Malang" Santos until May 15 at the Upper Ground Floor of Gateway Mall*
NEW STORES — ***Fully Booked** (Level 2), **Time Zone** (Level 3), **Celio** (Ground Floor) & and **Kashieca** (Level 3); all at Gateway Mall*
PERFORMANCES — ***Guarana, Acoustic Jive, Arthur Manuntag / Romy Posadas & Friends** are set to perform on May 13, 14 & 15 respectively at The Gateway Pavilion.*

LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

Allona, from crooner to rocker

SPIN CITY

ALLONA has reinvented herself from crooner to rocker with this new album curiously titled "Out of Control," under E-Real Records. She's out to prove there's more to her deep, sultry voice than the '90s ballad "Someone's Always Saying Goodbye."

Purposeful life

JAMIE Rivera

The latest from Jamie Rivera is the inspirational album, "Purpose Driven Life."

Star Records says it has sold over 20,000 copies, making it as much of a bestseller as the book on which it was based.

Erik Lite

"This is the Moment," the debut album of "Star in a Million" champ Erik Santos, was quickly declared platinum. Star Records wasted no time in releasing a follow-up compilation, a CD lite titled "I'll Never Go."

Ultimate Rachelle Ann

Yet another singing champ with a new album is Rachelle Ann Go, whose limited edition CD from Viva Records contains three songs and five music videos.

The three tracks in the album are "We Are One People," a dance remix of "Don't Cry Out Loud," and a "Sharon Cuneta Medley."

Champs' album

It's the turn of GMA 7's singing champs to churn out a CD.

GMA Records has just released "Pinoy Pop Superstar The Finalists" album, which features the six contenders belting out their winning pieces: "If You're Not the One" by Michael Garcia, "If You Don't Know Me By Now" by Kristel Astor, "I Believe" by Charmaine Piamonte, "Through the Fire" by MC Monterola, "Home" by Brenan Espartinez, and "It Might Be You" by Jonalyn Viray.

With a twist

IL Divo

Here's a boy band with an operatic twist.

Il Divo was formed by much-loathed "American Idol" juror Simon Cowell. The group lends an operatic touch to such pop songs as Frank Sinatra's "My Way" and Toni Braxton's "Unbreak My Heart," as illustrated in their CD released locally by BMG Records Pilipinas.

From Canada with love

CHRISTINE Evans

Following in the footsteps of such Canadian successes as Anne Murray and Alanis Morissette is 14-year-old singer-songwriter Christine Evans.

Admirers say her debut album, "Take Me Home," proves that she is "mature beyond her age."

Her music is now heard on Jam 88.3 FM.

Hot hits

BMG Records Pilipinas and Sony Music, in cooperation with MCA Universal, present "HOT," a collection of 18 of "the hottest hits of the season," among them "Lose My Breath" by Destiny's Child, "Goodies" by Ciara (featuring Petey Pablo) "Do Something" by Britney Spears, "Vertigo" by U2, and "This Love" by Maroon 5.

Stereophonics

That inimitable Stereophonics sound is showcased in the group's new No. 1 album, "Language, Sex, Violence, Other?"

The first single off the album, "Dakota," debuted at No. 1, too. The follow-up, "Superman," is just as "punchy and energetic."

Stereophonics' new album is released locally by Universal Records.

Boys' voice

Showtown's newest boy band 604 was launched recently by GMA Records with the pop CD "Bringin' It." Composed of Fil-Canadians Nino, Ross and Francis, 604 offers an "eclectic and polished" sound. Featured on the CD are the trio's version of Brian McKnight's "Win" and an a cappella version of Bread's "If."

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

'THE GREAT INDIAN WITCH'

In the tribal belts of India something is amiss. A deep, dark magic is stalking the land, reportedly turning women into witches overnight. In the hysteria, few are asking if these women are real witches. National Geographic Channel helps viewers rethink the way they see Asia through "Real Asia" documentaries from China, Japan, India, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. Tonight at 10, the feature is "The Great Indian Witch."

A wedding ...

From page A32

mansion where Jolie lives with adopted son Maddox," it said.

Beniffer 2 Jr

And also in LA, actress Jennifer Garner is preparing for a real life role as mother, according to E! News, which reported Monday that the "Elektra" star and boyfriend Ben Affleck are expecting their first child.

Citing multiple sources close to the couple, the entertainment network said Garner was three months pregnant.

The news come just weeks after reports that Affleck and Garner had become engaged.

Affleck's publicist declined to confirm or deny the pregnancy report, saying he did not comment on the star's personal life, while Garner's publicist did not immediately return calls.

AFP, AP

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2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
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8:00, 11:00
PG-13

3 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
PLEASE CALL FOR SCREENING TIME
PG 13

4 AMITYVILLE HORROR
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MTRCB ▶ PG-13

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ORLANDO BLOOM

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

NOW SHOWING

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MTRCB: PG - 13
12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10.10 LMF

2 THE INTERPRETER
MTRCB: PG - 13

3 AMITYVILLE HORROR
SUBJECT FOR MTRCB RATING

4 IN GOOD COMPANY
SUBJECT FOR MTRCB RATING

PREMIERE THEATRE HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
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HEAD IN THE CLOUDS R13	AMITYVILLE HORROR	KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PG13

star group of cinemas movie guide
IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

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3 Tagos sa Laman
4 Kingdom of Heaven
5 XXX 2

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EWAN McGREGOR NATALIE PORTMAN HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN
IAN McDIARMID SAMUEL L. JACKSON CHRISTOPHER LEE
JOHN WILLIAMS RICK McCALLUM
GEORGE LUCAS
THX
OPENS MAY 19

‘Madonna of Madrid’ in Manila

PENELOPE CRUZ
The Girl of Your Dreams

THE INSTITUTO Cervantes presents the "Madonna of Madrid," Penelope Cruz, in a retrospective of films that showcase both her famed sensuality and her complexity as an actress.

Although Penelope is now more famous for her Hollywood potboilers, her body of work in Spanish cinema is quite impressive.

Quirky

Showing on May 14 is *"El Amor Perjudica Seriamente la Salud* (Love is Dangerous to Your Health)." Directed by Manuel Gómez Pereira, the movie chronicles a quirky love story set amid the Beatles' visit to Madrid.

Dreamy

To be screened on May 21 is *"La Niña de tus Ojos* (The Girl of Your Dreams)" by filmmaker Fernando Trueba. With war-torn Europe as backdrop, a Spanish film crew is invited to Nazi Germany to shoot a popular Andalusian musical.

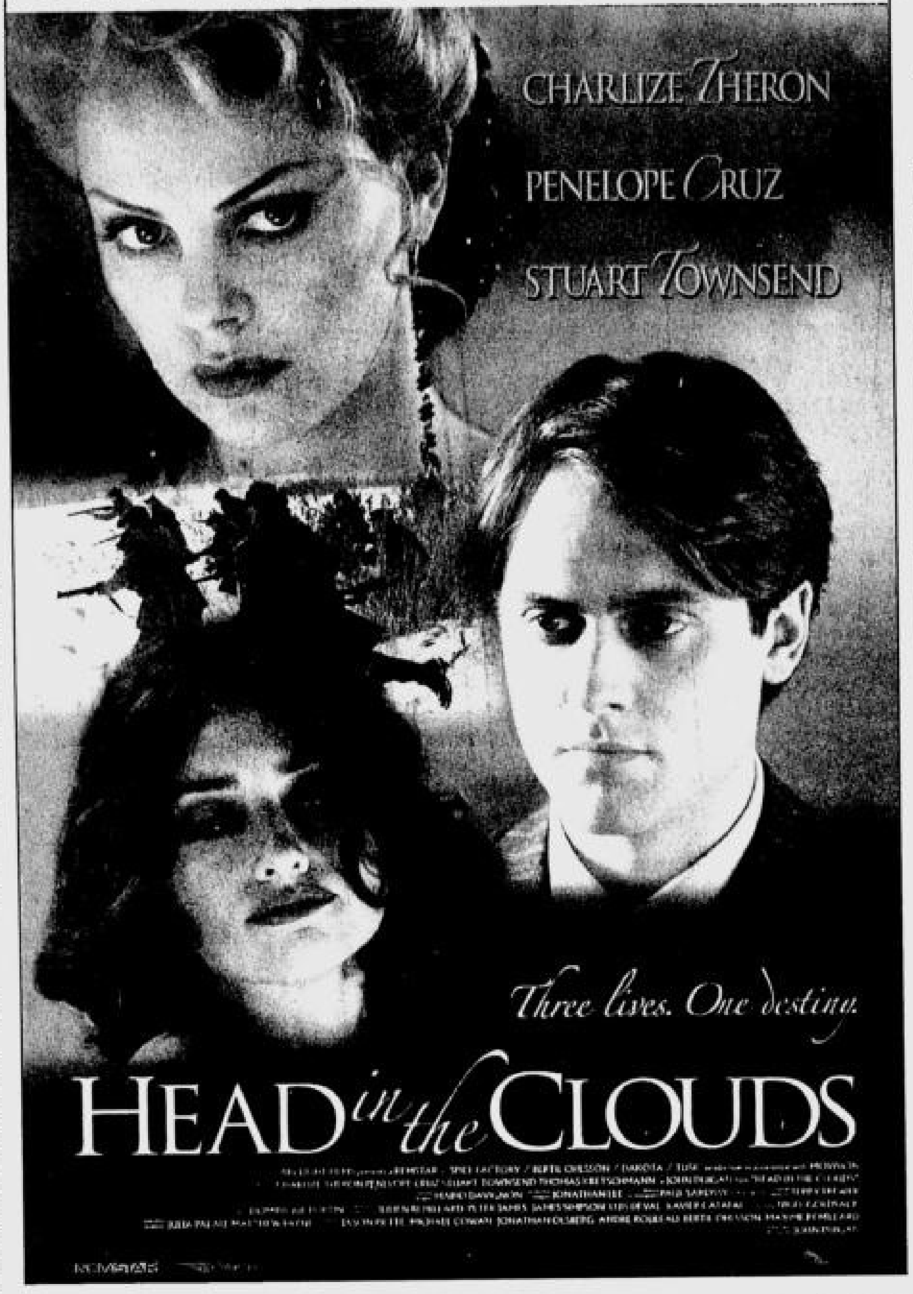
Both films are in Spanish with English subtitles.

Controversial

On May 28, *"No te Muevas* (Don't Move)" is bound to stir controversy. Directed by Sergio Castellitto, this highly charged sexual drama is told from the points of view of a sensitive man and an impoverished woman—both struggling with loneliness and despair. Strictly for adults, this film is in Spanish with Spanish subtitles.

Free of charge, screenings are held 5 p.m. at the Instituto, 2515 Leon Guinto cor. Estrada Sts. 1004 Malate, Manila. Call 5261482 to 85.

OPENS TODAY


CHARLIZE THERON
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Three lives. One destiny.
HEAD in the CLOUDS

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DAD'S BOSS.
In Good Company

OPENS TODAY

THE FIRST FULLY DOCUMENTED CASE OF DEMONIC POSSESSION

ON November 13, 1973, police received a frantic phone call that led them to a nightmarish crime scene at the Defeo residence in Amityville, Long Island - an entire family had been murdered in their beds while they slept. The murderer, Ronald Defeo confessed to killing his parents and four siblings, saying "demonic spirits" in the house possessed him and drove him to the massacre.

One year later, the new house owners, George and Kathy Lutz and their children moved into the house thinking it would be their dream home.

What happened next inside this haunted house will shock you to no end.

28 days after moving in, the Lutzes abandoned the residence-lucky to escape with their lives.

THIS IS THEIR TRUE STORY.

THE AMITYVILLE HORROR

RYAN REYNOLDS MELLISA GEORGE MIRAMAX

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Advance tickets for sale at no extra service fee from May 6, 2005 onwards. Available at the Shang Cineplex ticket counters at Level 6 and the ticket booth at Level 1.

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Premiere Theater - P295
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Shangri-La Plaza

Decena to chief prosecutor: Testify

CRISTINA Decena in the early stages of her legal battle.

By Marinel R. Cruz

BUSINESSWOMAN Cristina Castillo-Decena has challenged Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño to "testify" on the alleged move by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales to "fast track" the resolution of estafa cases she earlier filed against former live-in partner, actor Phillip Salvador.

Decena on Monday filed a complaint before the Commission on Appointments against Gonzales for the "unmistakable bias and partiality" she claimed she experienced in pursuit of the charges.

In her letter to Senate President and Commission on Appointments chair Franklin Drilon, Decena said Gonzales, "in his desire to help the Salvadors, created a 'special lane' to fast track the resolution of the petition for review" that Phillip and his brother Ramon filed in March.

On April 25, Gonzalez issued a resolution "directing" the Las Piñas Prosecutor's Office to "cause the withdrawal" of the estafa case concerning 10 jeepneys that Decena bought in December 2001, ostensibly for management by Ramon.

"Gonzales acted as the evaluator, reviewer and approving officer of the said resolution, something that is strange and improper for a department secretary," noted Decena.

She challenged the Senate to issue a subpoena to Zuño, the chief evaluator and the reviewer, "to prove that the resolution did not pass through them."

The Las Piñas Prosecutor's Office recommended the filing of the charges against the Salvadors in February.

Personal Interest

Also filed before the Las Piñas RTC is an estafa case in connection with the amount totaling $100,000 that the Salvador brothers allegedly received from Decena for the freight and remittance business she helped put up with them in December 2001.

Decena said Gonzales took "personal and special interest" in the estafa cases. She pointed out that while it normally took the DOJ 10 months to come up with a resolution for a petition for review, it took Gonzales only less than two months in this case.

Gonzales' resolution said the documents that Decena presented before the court "hardly prove the estafa." It continued: "There is thus no estafa for which respondents should be prosecuted."

In her complaint letter to the Senate, Decena said she was "formally opposing" Gonzales' appointment because "his actions render him unfit to become the secretary of the Department of Justice."

She also said she had received information that Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. approached Gonzalez "to extend the Salvadors a helping hand."

"No litigant can be assured that the DOJ would render impartial justice under his stewardship," Decena said.

Poking fun at 'AI' mess

NEW YORK—Paula Abdul seems intent on laughing at the controversy surrounding her.

The "American Idol" judge being investigated for an alleged affair with a former contestant made a cameo appearance introducing the opening sketch on NBC's "Saturday Night Live."

Corey Clark, the former contestant, claimed this week that Abdul had an affair with him.

ABC's "Primetime Live" aired an expose of the scandal, which the SNL cast lampooned.

The sketch featured Amy Poehler as Abdul and Finesse Mitchell as Clark. At the end of the sequence, Abdul made her own "Idol"-style critiques of her imitator.

To Poehler she said: "You need to... be a lot sexier so contestants will be willing to sleep with you."

Méanwhile, the wildly popular tilt is down to four finalists—clockwise from top left, Carrie Underwood, Bo Bice, Anthony Federov and Vonzell Solomon. *AP*

A wedding, a baby and a love nest

OSCAR-winning actress Renee Zellweger and country music star Kenny Chesney were married Monday in a small ceremony on the Caribbean island of St. John in the US Virgin Islands, a publicist for Zellweger said.

The ceremony was witnessed by close friends and family, Los Angeles-based publicist Nanci Ryder said in a statement. The bride wore Carolina Herrera, she added. It was the first marriage for both.

The wedding reception was held late Monday at Chesney's house in the gated community of Peter Bay, outside St. John's main town, Cruz Bay.

Residents say 37-year-old Chesney, originally from east Tennessee, is a familiar face around Cruz Bay, but it was not immediately known how long he has lived in St. John. Zellweger, who turned 36 two weeks ago, is from Katy, Texas.

The couple met at the Concert of Hope tsunami relief benefit Jan. 15 in California, where Chesney was singing and Zellweger was answering telephones, the syndicated television news magazine "The Insider" reported.

Brad gets closer

In London, a tabloid report on Tuesday said Brad Pitt was planning to move there to be closer to rumored lover Angelina Jolie.

Pitt, 41, was looking for a five-million-pound ($9.4-million) West London home, said Britain's top-selling daily, The Sun, citing anonymous sources.

"He has told estate agents to find a pad around west London, handy for the Buckinghamshire

A WEDDING/ A30

Somewhere between insomnia and breakfast.

The phone rang and a hand found its way out from under the sheets, groping for the receiver. "Hi Charisse!" said a voice too cheerful to sound like 4AM. Charisse cleared her throat underneath the pillow and put on her smiley voice. "Good morning Mrs. Villa. How may I help you?"

For the next twenty minutes, Mrs. Villa discussed her finances, the status of her accounts, the latest rates, how her portfolio was doing. Charisse, wide awake now, jotted down notes, and responded equally quick. "Yes, Mrs. Villa. Of course we'll do that." Or alternately "I'll get back to you on that as soon as I check some figures."

It wasn't some emergency financial crisis that was being put to rest here. Or the whim of some obsessive-compulsive business mogul. It was just a normal bank transaction.

Or at least what passed as such for Mrs. Villa, a certified insomniac. Charisse was used to it by now and was recognized, jokingly, as the bank's Banking In Bed specialist. And in some strange way, had grown to like the early morning talks. It got her up early. And always gave her time for breakfast.

"Oh, and Charisse, I have no idea where to find a prom date for Julie. Do you think you could help me out with that, too?"

"Julie's a pretty girl, Mrs. Villa. I'd worry more about her dress than her date."

"You're right of course. Did you get the instructions I left yesterday? The one about the time deposit?"

"Yes ma'am. Our messenger picked it up first thing yesterday."

"Hay naku. I wouldn't know what to do without you, Charisse."

"It's no problem at all, Mrs. Villa. No problem at all." The conversation had wound down to stretch marks and the quest for wrinkle prevention when a stifled yawn came from Mrs. Villa's end of the line.

"Sounds like you need to get some rest, Mrs. Villa. And I need to start getting ready for work anyway."

"Of course. Sorry I talk so much. You have a good day, Charisse. Good morning!"

"And good night to you, Mrs. Villa."

Charisse stretched, smiled, and figured it would be a sinangag and danggit kind of day.

(If this doesn't sound like the kind of relationship you have with your bank, you may want to give us a try.)

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JONALYN Viray: What a slip!

Small girl, big victory

The first 'Pinoy Pop Superstar' almost tripped, literally, on the way to her winning performance

By Kathryn L. Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperas

THE SMALLEST girl with the biggest voice in the competition became the country's first "Pinoy Pop Superstar" on Sunday.

Along with winning the GMA 7 singing contest, Jonalyn Viray saw her biggest dreams come true.

The plucky 15-year-old, all of five feet tall, bested seven other finalists, effortlessly moving up to the second round with an impressive rendition of "It Might Be You." Three others qualified for that level—Charmaine Piamonte, Michael Anthony Garcia and Brenan Espartinez, who sang it out with Jonalyn in the decision round.

The following day, Jonalyn told INQUIRER Entertainment: "This still feels like a dream. But I'm starting to see it really happened, and I'm very happy."

She recalled that when Brenan's name was called out for the final showdown, all she could think of was when they first met—the week when, as a challenger, she faced Brenan, who had been the champion for five weeks. She unseated him.

The original panel of judges—arranger-composer Danny Tan, director Floy Quintos, and singer Jaya—were joined by singer Kyla and GMA Records executive vice presi-

SMALL/ A2-2

AMY Perez loves herself more now

'MTB' loss drove Amy to therapy

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"I WAS depressed. I had to consult a psychiatrist."

TV host Amy Perez thus recalled the two whole years it took for her to recover from the heartbreak of losing her old job on "Magandang Tanghali Bayan (MTB, on ABS-CBN)."

Suddenly concerned that she might have revealed too much, too soon to a handful of entertainment journalists, Amy backtracked a bit. "It's sad that when you see a [therapist] many Filipinos still think you are crazy. Actually, I underwent therapy only because I wanted to get things off my chest."

Amy's breakthrough proved deceptively simple. She proceeded: "The doctor told me that I should watch the new 'MTB.' So I did, portion by portion. I'd watch, then I'd switch channels."

It took her two years to recover from the slump

Before she knew it, she had accepted the painful truth.

"I wouldn't be a hypocrite and deny how hurt I had been," she said. "Everyone has to grapple with ego and pride. On the other hand, we are all aware of our abilities, especially in the jobs that we love. I used to tell myself, 'How I wish I could do it again.'"

The therapy helped Amy move on.

"I learned to love myself more, to give myself importance," she said. "All those things were happening at the same time—in my career, in my love life... I discussed all the issues with my doctor. Now, I love myself more. I own my time, I own myself. I am more than content taking care of my son Adi."

Professionally, things have also

MTB/ A2-2

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OPENING TODAY

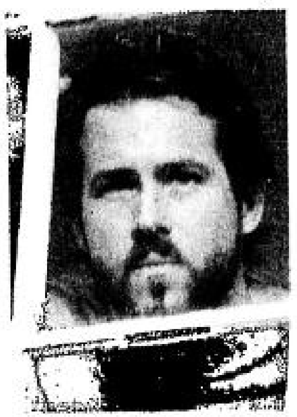
In Good Company

Directed by Paul Weitz
Stars Dennis Quaid, Topher Grace, Scarlett Johansson, Selma Blair, Clark Gregg

Summary: Dan Foreman has a new boss—Carter Duryea who's half his age. Dan has two daughters—Alex, age 18, and Jana, 16—and is shocked when his wife tells him she's pregnant again. Carter is dumped by his wife of seven months and begins an affair with Dan's daughter Alex.

Roger Ebert wrote this Jan. 14 review for the Chicago-Sun Times: "Quaid has a comfort level in roles like this that makes him effortlessly convincing... Scarlett Johansson continues to employ the gravitational pull of quiet fascination. As in 'Lost in Translation' and 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' (both much better films), she creates a zone of her own importance into which men are drawn not so much by lust as by the feeling that she knows something about life that they might be able to learn."

The Amityville Horror



Directed by Andrew Douglas
Stars Ryan Reynolds, Melissa George, Jimmy Bennett, Jesse James, Rachel Nichols

Summary: On Nov. 14, 1974, police received a frantic phone call that led them to a nightmarish crime scene at the Defeo residence in Amityville, Long Island—an entire family had been slaughtered in their beds. One year later, George and Kathy Lutz and their three children move into the house thinking it would be their dream home. But shortly after settling in, bizarre and unexplainable events began to occur.

Bob Longino wrote this review for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "The new 'The Amityville Horror" is a boo-scare haunted house spectacular. It's got more insta-ghoulish visions, quick-moving shadows and ear-splitting music swells than any marginally decent scary movie needs. It also features the ghost of a little girl with stringy hair who looks like she just might have climbed out of a dark, dank well. Which is the point. There's nothing this 'Amityville' won't beg, borrow, steal from or fabricate in trying to make your neck hairs sit up and quiver."

Head in the Clouds

Directed by John Duigan
Stars Charlize Theron, Penélope Cruz, Stuart Townsend, Thomas Kretschmann, Daniel Gillies

Summary: Set in the 1930s and 1940s, before and during World War II, this tale of wartime romance focuses on Gilda Besse, a fashion photographer living in occupied Paris who shares her apartment with a Spanish Civil War refugee, Mia and an Irish schoolteacher, Guy, with whom she falls in love.

Megan Lehmann wrote this review for the New York Post: "Charlize Theron and her real-life beau Stuart Townsend must have had fun making the wartime romance... As star-crossed lovers, they spend the first half of this somewhat schizophrenic film doing what lovers do—in the bath, standing up against a wall and, at one point, in a bed alongside Penelope Cruz.

Theron, back to tip-top glamourpuss form in her first role since winning an Oscar for 'Monster,' also goes topless, dances an erotically charged tango with Cruz, and takes part in an S&M session in a seedy motel room. Once her character's wild-child credentials are established, however, [the movie] abruptly switches gears and plunges into a look at the horrors of war. That means no more sexy ménage à trois."

EDWARD Norton behind a mask in the Ridley Scott film

'Kingdom of Heaven' rules US box office

LOS ANGELES—The epic battle tale "Kingdom of Heaven" fought its way to the top of the box office, taking in $20 million in its debut weekend.

The film by "Gladiator" director Ridley Scott features heartthrob Orlando Bloom as a warrior in Jerusalem between the Second and Third Crusades. The R-rated movie was followed in the rankings by another new R-rated movie, "House of Wax," which brought in $12.2 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Kingdom of Heaven" features Bloom as blacksmith-turned-warrior Balian who joins his knightly father in Jerusalem. The film also features Liam Neeson as Balian's father, the knight Godfrey of Ibelin, as well as Jeremy Irons and Brendan Gleeson.

Holywood slump

"House of Wax," featuring Elisha Cuthbert and Paris Hilton in a remake of the Vincent Price horror tale, is the latest from producer Joel Silver's Dark Castle Entertainment.

The other notable new movie this weekend was "Crash," which features Don Cheadle, Sandra Bullock, Matt Dillon and rapper Chris "Ludacris" Bridges in intertwining stories examining racial stereotypes in Los Angeles. The R-rated film played in 1,864 theaters and finished fourth with $9.1 million.

"The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" dropped to third place with nearly $9.13 million after debuting last weekend at the top spot.

Hollywood's box office slump continued with revenues down for the 11th straight weekend compared to the same weekend last year, said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

"It was quite an underwhelming week," Dergarabedian said. "This is theoretically the first weekend of the summer and it doesn't feel like one."

Though "Kingdom of Heaven" pulled in $20 million, it paled in comparison to other recent blockbusters that opened during the first weekend of May, Dergarabedian said. "Van Helsing" opened last year with a three-day haul of $51.7 million, while "X2: X-Men United" opened in 2003 with $85.6 million. In 2002, "Spider-Man" debuted the same weekend and collected a whopping $114.8 million.

"Kingdom of Heaven" played in wide release at 3,216 theaters and averaged $6,219 per cinema, said Bruce Snyder, president of domestic distribution at Twentieth Century Fox. It also opened in nearly 100 international markets and earned an additional $56 million Snyder said.

Box office watchers anticipate that Hollywood's slide will end May 19 when the final installment in the "Star Wars" prequel trilogy debuts.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations:

1) "Kingdom of Heaven," $20 million
2) "House of Wax," $12.2 M
3) "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," $9.1 M
4) "Crash," $9.1 M
5) "The Interpreter," $7.5 M
6) "XXX: State of the Union," $5.4 M
7) "The Amityville Horror," $3.2 M
8) "Sahara," $3.1 M
9) "A Lot Like Love," $3 M
10) "Fever Pitch," $2 M

AP

DJ Boy George, party without drugs

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

SATURDAY night. For several hours I felt completely out of place at the NBC Tent of the Fort Bonifacio Global City, pacing back and forth and resolutely keeping boredom at bay while dance music slapped my chest and eardrums.

It was 10 p.m. and I was munching peanuts and sipping bottled water, deliberately avoiding the long list of booze at the bar. But this event was taxing my patience—and imperiling a vow to stay clean and sober.

I was there to catch a glimpse of George O' Dowd, more recognizable of course as Boy George of Culture Club fame. In the '80s, George shared the limelight with the rest of England's New Wave superstars that arose from the punk rock explosion on both sides of the Atlantic.

Now hear this: George is now a club DJ and, last Saturday, he was playing records with another jock named DJ Marc Vedo.

Friendly tip

Earlier, an old friend had briefed me on what to expect: "Forget the fact that Boy George was hooked on heroin; that was a long time ago. He's gone straight since and gained a reputation as a good DJ who's played at parties hosted by Prince Charles and Versace."

BUT he didn't come out till 3 a.m.

Old Friend walked in two hours after I had grown tired of watching a slow parade of kids in their 20s, most of them backslapping and engaging in small talk, others making a beeline for drinks, generally itching to put their dancing feet to work.

An hour past midnight, DJ Marc Vedo materialized on stage and started manning the sound decks. By this time, an older crowd had arrived: models in bare backs and minis, socialites, impresarios, radio station and club owners, record company executives, rock stars and others normally referred to as the "beautiful people."

Watching beautiful people provided an amusing distraction, and I almost missed out on the fact that Vedo had started doing great mixes. The secret to being a good DJ is having the skill to mix in a very recognizable song when the crowd least expects it.

In Vedo's hands, Michael Jackson's "Beat It," Jefferson Airplane's "Somebody To Love," Dire Straits' "Money For Nothing," Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," and Prince's "Sign o' the Times" came on seamlessly in the mix.

I inched closer to the stage for a better look at the dancing crowd. I could count with my fingers those who were really letting their hair down; the rest were content nodding their heads or swaying their butts for a few seconds before stopping and looking at each other. Either they were timid... or just waiting for George.

Gentlemanly

And boy, was I tempted to go home. He didn't show up till 3 a.m.

When he finally did, the crowd erupted in cheers. The former cross-dressing singer of the hits "Karma Chameleon," "Do You Really Want To Hurt Me" and "Love is Love," among others, looked rather gentlemanly in a black fedora and suit over a printed shirt.

Everyone was naturally waiting to see what he would put in the mix. I half-expected it would be one from the '80s. I was not disappointed. Soon enough, the bopping synthesizer grooves in Depeche Mode's 'Just Can't Get Enough" was heard amid shouts of "Yeooow ...whoa!!!"

At that instant, I was reviving the moves I remembered doing at Where Else, On, Lost Horizon and other "discos" of a half-forgotten era. I must confess that the last time I tried entering dance clubs four years ago, I felt like an oddball, not knowing how to respond to a stranger girl strung out on ecstasy and hugging me like a long-lost friend.

Saturday night, Boy George seemed to me like a long-lost friend egging me to party—without the drugs.

Better TV affairs

FOR A LONG time now been unhappy about the bench of good interview TV channels. We have b news and public affairs p scout around for and deve terviewers who can do ju complex issues being di television these days.

Despite this increasing a few qualified intervie emerged, so they are b worked, thus watering do tegrity and perceptivene work.

That's why we were re py to see that the "On Line a guest host in the person Quezon III. He capably i some guests on their vie new Roman Catholic po Benedict XVI.

We trust that Quezon more regular presence screen, on "On Line" or show produced especiall Local viewers will definit from the clarity of his th the perceptiveness of his i

Granted, he still has to himself to the unique re of the television mediu should be able to do that i so we are looking forwar more of Manuel Quezon tube. Kudos to "On Line" getting him on TV.

But one Quezon won't r the dearth of good intervie cal TV. So, we trust that works will work harder to d and better on-camera talen news and public affairs prog

That way, the qualified ers we have won't be so o and overexposed, and ca some *really* good work. A viewers deserve the best. You bet—we do!

'Mummy Autopsy'

Starting May 14, Disco nel telecasts "Mummy Au ries that mixes history wi mystery. It tracks a globe of mummy specialists as t gate and solve an array o es from the ancient past. at 10 p.m., with replays o 6 p.m., and Monday at 4 p

This Saturday, the scie to the National Museum

'MTB' loss

From page A2-1

picked up.

After a brief telenove stint on GMA 7 and her h on the ABC 5 gab fest "De her old network ABS-C Amy to co-host the mor "M.R.S. (Most Requested

The bonus is: Her co-h "MTB" colleague Roderic

"I've known Kuya Di ick's pet name] for mor years," she said. "We sta ing on "Sang Linggo nAp we became close on 'MTB

Now, they're not just dies, Amy would gladly a sister-confidante-nanny Kuya Dick anytime.

At the height of "Daghang Salamat" even the other weekend, Amy Roderick's hotel room an sister Stella answered, concerned that he had v up.

"It was 9:30 a.m.," Am "and we had an 11 a.m. c 'A.S.A.P. 2005.' His own s

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Small girl, big victory

From page A2-1

dent and chief operating officer Felipe S. Yalong on Sunday for the event dubbed "Grand Showdown."

The decision round turned out to be a friendly competition.

"All (eight) of us are very close," Jonalyn pointed out. "We were together constantly for three weeks. I miss them already."

Brenan, the Sunday crowd favorite, won the Coca-Cola Most Admired Superstar Award, voted by the contestants themselves.

Walking to center stage in the second round, Jonalyn almost tripped. She later said she hadn't noticed that her heels needed fixing. But this did not distract her from delivering her winning performances till the end.

Jonalyn's total prize package is worth P5 million. She is now the owner of a Futura Classic house and lot from Filinvest and a brand new Toyota Innova. She received P1 million in cash from Coca-Cola, an exclusive one-year recording contract with GMA Records, P100,000 worth of Belo Medical Group services and Gandang Ricky Reyes gift certificates worth P50,000.

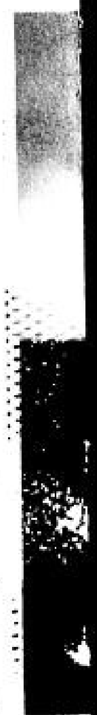
RUNNER-UP and crowd favorite Brenan Espartinez

Prior to "Pinoy Pop Superstar," Jonalyn joined several other singing contests, including "Teen Pop Star" on Channel 2, "Birit Bulilit" on Channel 13 and "Batang Vidaylin" on Channel 5.

Now that she has won, Jonalyn, eldest in a brood of four, said she intended to resume her studies through the DECS home study program.

"Pinoy Pop Superstar" host Regine Velasquez, herself a product of numerous small contests, was caught on camera in tears after the announcement of the winners. Jonalyn was joined onstage by her father, stepmother and siblings. Her parents are separated.

Tearfully, Jonalyn sang "Close To Where You Are," specially composed by Danny Tan for the first "Pinoy Pop Superstar." The song will be the carrier single of Jonalyn's launching album.



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in Edinburgh, where the 3,500-year-old remains of two ancient Egyptians from Qurneh lie. Are they of royal blood? In the absence of viable DNA, could a facial reconstruction show any likeness between two mummies? Could they be mother and child?

'Ice Hotel'

Still on Discovery Channel, a one-hour special, "Ice Hotel," premieres tomorrow at 11 p.m. (replays on May 13 at 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.), and May 15 at 11 a.m. and 11 p.m.

The special is about a unique hotel in Sweden constructed totally from snow and ice—and rebuilt every winter!

'Charmed' on Studio 23

The seventh season of "Charmed" has started telecasting every Monday on Studio 23. New episodes feature the continuing adventures of the Halliwell sisters, three good witches who band together to fulfill an ancient witchcraft prophecy.

Series stars Alyssa Milano, Holly Marie Combs and Rose McGowan now have two new hunks to contend with—and for 98° singer Nick Lachey and "Dawson's Creek" favorite Kerr Smith.

'Supersize Rock'

The new album, "Supersize Rock," is a collection of 15 tracks from bands that have been defining the local rock landscape.

The newest entry is Spongecola, a college foursome enjoying success with its single, "KLSP." Add the shirtless antics of Kjwan ("Daliri") and the creed-like growls of Fil-Am imports The Speaks (Life's a Joke"), and you've got the right formula for It band domination.

Other cuts feature Kitchie Nadal ("Bulong"), Rivermaya ("Ambulansya"), The Dawn ("Tulad ng Dati"), Barbie's Cradle ("Pag-Ibig"), Urbandub ("Under Crisis") and Sandwich ("Right Now").

drove Amy to therapy

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if I could wake up Dick for her."

Ever so maternally, she roused her friend from the deep slumber. "Baby, wake up *na*," Amy cooed on the phone. "At the same time," she said, "I was ordering breakfast for him—tocino, eggs, coffee. mango juice. He can't take orange juice because it gives him acid. I know him so well '*no*?"

Amy and Roderick are also getting along great with the "MRS" crew.

"Our bonding activity is badminton, thrice a week. If we don't have a live show the next day, we play badminton the night before. We are really enjoying ourselves on the show because we are working with kids like Toni [Gonzaga] and Nikki [Gil] who are eager to learn and are dedicated to their jobs."

Asked about scandal TV, the actress-host laughed off the possibility of having a sex video in her closet, thus: "I'd like to make one with Kuya Dick, so televiewers would end up, laughing for a change."

Ah, that would be a sex-comedy video!

YN and Brenan are close friends

The Amityville Horror: Haunted House Revisited

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

"A demon in the House" ---a scene from The Amityville Horror

Based on Materials Provided by George and Kathleen Lutz © 2000 George and Kathleen

"The Amityville Horror" is one of the most controversial paranormal events of all time. In fact, its notoriety has reached all four corners of the globe.

A NEW LIFE TOGETHER

Married in July of 1975, George and Kathleen Lutz spent most of the summer and fall looking for a home on Long Island's South Shore in New York.

In the midst of their search for a home, the Lutzes contacted realtor Edith Evans of Conklin Realty in Massapequa Park, Long Island.

Knowing of the Lutzes' stringent requirements, Evans decided to show them a house located in Amityville-a close knit community that proudly boasted of its rich history.

As the Lutzes walked into the marbled foyer. Kathy was exuberant, almost hypnotized by the house's charm.

George and Kathy vaguely remembered the gruesome murder story inside the house, but never had much interest in it.

George have a priest bless their new home.

Father Ray was in his early forties, slimly built. He arrived to bless the Lutzes' new home as promised on moving day.

Once inside, Father Ray began his blessing of the house. The ritual proceeded without incident until he reached one of the second floor bedrooms. While blessing the room, a masculine voice ordered him to, "GET OUT"! Stunned, Father Ray turned to see he was still alone in the room.

He continued with the blessing and flicked the holy water until suddenly an unseen hand slapped him across the face. Unnerved by what had taken place, Father Ray left the room.

After finishing, the priest rejoined George and Kathy downstairs. Right away they noticed that the priest's face had grown pale with exhaustion. Concerned, George and Kathy invited the priest to stay for dinner. Citing a previous engagement, Father Ray refused the Lutzes' offer.

"As he was leaving, Father Ray inquired about the second floor room which was going to be Kathy's sewing room," remembers George. Kathy adds, "Father Ray calmly informed us not to spend too much time in there and never to use it as a bedroom. Since it was not in the plans to be used as a bedroom it did not phase me." As they returned to work, the Lutzes had no way of knowing that a chain of events had just been set in motion.

THE NIGHTMARE BEGINS

Right away the Lutz family began experiencing strange phenomenon at 112 Ocean Avenue. Episodes such as mysterious odors lingering, toilets turning black, green ooze coming from within walls, windows opening and closing by themselves, and swarms of flies appearing in only in the sewing room all seemed to point to one conclusion. Something was terribly wrong with their new house. Events slowly escalated over the remainder of December 1975.

One day while unpacking, Kathy was shocked to discover her silver crucifix hanging upside down in her closet. She tried to ignore the event, but soon found it compounded her growing concern with her new home.

By the beginning of the second week in January 1976, the force in the house had grown bolder. In one instance, George almost murdered his whole family after a hypnotic voice asked him to do so.

Desperate, the Lutzes called Father Ray, unaware that he was besieged with his own terrors from blessing their house. "Each time the call connected, a loud, crackling static erupted over the line forcing us to hang-up," explains Kathy. Deciding that something had to be done, the Lutzes took it upon themselves to re-bless the house. George and Kathy walked from room to room ordering what was there to leave in God's name. They halted when a chorus of voices shouted back, "Will you stop"! "I searched high and low in that house for speakers believing someone was playing a trick on us," insists George. "I just was not ready to believe in ghosts or spirits."

Life at 112 Ocean Avenue continued to worsen. Knowing the phone at his house could not be trusted, George went to his office to phone Father Ray. The priest listened intently to George and Kathy's description of the recent events. Calmly, their friend advised them to leave the house until things could be sorted out.

Agreeing that some time away was needed, the Lutzes decided to go to Kathy's mother's house. The family began preparations for a short trip after the children returned home from school that day.

The house rebelled at the sight of the family's departure. George remembers that "The temperature in 112 Ocean Avenue kept fluctuating between hot and cold. Noises similar to the creaks and groans of a ship started coming from the house. All of us were scared and just wanted to leave."

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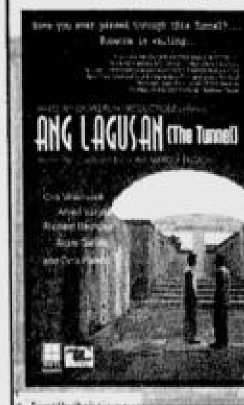

From the producers of the International critically aclaimed film "Sa Kandungan ng Langit" (Best Drama Feature Film award, New York International Independent Film And Video Festival 2004 and Finalist to the World Film Festival, Houston, Texas) comes another rivetingtale about a man in search for his true identity in "Ang Lagusan"

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sm cebu cinema

CINEMA 1: THE INTERPRETER
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00
9:07 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:40 END

CINEMA 3: GUESS WHO?
11:50 FS / 12:00 MF / 1:54 / 3:48 / 5:42 / 7:36
9:20 LFS/ 9:30 LMF / 11:55 END

☎ (032) 231-3878

METRO MANILA

sm megamall

1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
4 IN GOOD COMPANY
5 SIX
6 ANG LAGUSAN
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED
9 RESERVED
10 CAN THIS BE LOVE
11 THE WEDDING DATE
12 THE INTERPRETER

sm city fairview

1 THE PACIFIER
2 SAMARA: RING 2
3 SAHARA
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 GUESS WHO
6 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
7 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
8 THE INTERPRETER
9 CAN THIS BE LOVE
10 THE WEDDING DATE
11 SIX
12 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL

sm city north edsa

1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
3 RESERVED
4 CAN THIS BE LOVE
5 ARE WE THERE YET?
6 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
7 IN GOOD COMPANY
8 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR

sm city sta. mesa

1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 POOH HEFFALUMP MOVIE
3 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED
6 SIX
7 CAN THIS BE LOVE
8 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
9 IN GOOD COMPANY
10 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL

sm city southmall

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
4 IN GOOD COMPANY
5 GUESS WHO
6 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
7 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
8 CAN THIS BE LOVE
9 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
10 SIX

sm city manila

1 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
2 SIX
3 IN GOOD COMPANY
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 THE WEDDING DATE
6 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
7 GUESS WHO
8 THE INTERPRETER
9 CAN THIS BE LOVE
10 SAHARA
11 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
12 SAMARA: RING 2

sm cinema tutuban

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat

1 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
2 CAN THIS BE LOVE
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 IN GOOD COMPANY

sm city bicutan

1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 IN GOOD COMPANY
3 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
4 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL

LUZON

sm city pampanga

1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
3 THE JACKET
4 GUESS WHO
5 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
6 CAN THIS BE LOVE

sm city baguio

1 THE INTERPRETER
2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
3 GUESS WHO
4 SAHARA

sm city batangas

1 SAHARA
2 CAN THIS BE LOVE
3 THE PACIFIER
4 THE WEDDING DATE

sm city marilao

1 SAHARA
2 GUESS WHO
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS

sm city bacoor

1 SAMARA: RING 2
2 THE INTERPRETER
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
5 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
6 CAN THIS BE LOVE
7 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
8 SIX

sm city dasmariñas

1 CAN THIS BE LOVE
2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
3 SAHARA
4 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS

sm city lucena

1 SAHARA
2 THE PACIFIER
3 CAN THIS BE LOVE
4 THE WEDDING DATE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu

1 THE INTERPRETER
2 RESERVED
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 GUESS WHO
5 THE WEDDING DATE
6 CURSED
7 CAN THIS BE LOVE
8 ONG BAK: THE THAI WARRIOR

sm city iloilo

1 THE PACIFIER
2 RESERVED
3 CAN THIS BE LOVE
4 SAHARA
5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 GUESS WHO
7 RESERVED
8 THE WEDDING DATE

sm city davao

1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
3 CAN THIS BE LOVE
4 GUESS WHO
5 THE INTERPRETER
6 FINDING NEVERLAND

sm city cagayan de oro

1 SAHARA
2 CAN THIS BE LOVE
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

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G1 GLORIETTA 1
1 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
2 SA AKING PAGKAKAGISING MULA SA KAMULATAN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 CAN THIS BE LOVE

G4 GLORIETTA 4
1 IN GOOD COMPANY
2 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
3 THX KINGDOM OF HEAVEN GUARANTEED SEATS
4 SHATTERED GLASS
5 XXX 2
6 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
7 GUESS WHO

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 IN GOOD COMPANY
2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

GB3 GREENBELT 3
1 THX THE AMITYVILLE HORROR GUARANTEED SEATS
2 THX KINGDOM OF HEAVEN GUARANTEED SEATS
3 THE INTERPRETER GUARANTEED SEATS
4 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS GUARANTEED SEATS
5 IN GOOD COMPANY GUARANTEED SEATS

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 THX KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 IN GOOD COMPANY
4 GUESS WHO
5 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 GUESS WHO
3 THE INTERPRETER
4 THE CURSED

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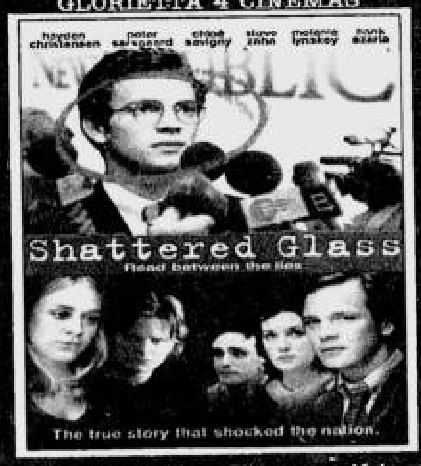

"One of the best films I've seen this year." Paul Clinton, CNN

"A darkly compelling thriller that puts journalistic ethics on trial." Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

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1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN • THX
2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
3 AMITYVILLE HORROR
4 XXX 2
5 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
6 IN GOOD COMPANY
7 SIX
8 BOSO
9 THE WEDDING DATE
10 GUESS WHO?

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 XXX 2
3 SIX
4 THE WEDDING DATE
5 IN GOOD COMPANY
6 AMITYVILLE HORROR
7 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199
1 XXX 2
2 SIX
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 IN GOOD COMPANY
7 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
8 AMITYVILLE HORROR

NOVALICHES 935-3228/31
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
3 GUESS WHO?
4 SIX
5 AMITYVILLE HORROR
6 XXX 2
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
4 IN GOOD COMPANY

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
3 SAHARA
4 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS

CAINTA 240-4661
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 XXX 2
3 SAHARA
4 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS

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CINEMAS

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1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 XXX 2
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 THE INTERPRETER
5 THE JACKET

LIPA (043) 757-3684 (043) 312-5870
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 THE WEDDING DATE
3 THE JACKET
4 THE INTERPRETER
5 THE PACIFIER

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 SAHARA
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 TAGOS SA LAMAN
5 XXX 2

ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 THE WEDDING DATE
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 GUESS WHO?

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 THE JACKET
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 XXX 2
5 THE INTERPRETER
6 SIX

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270
1 THE JACKET
2 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 XXX 2
5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 GUESS WHO?

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 XXX 2
3 THE WEDDING DATE
4 SAHARA
5 BOOGEYMAN
6 GUESS WHO?

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2 XXX 2
3 PARAISO
4 GUESS WHO?
5 SAHARA
6 THE WEDDING DATE

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2005

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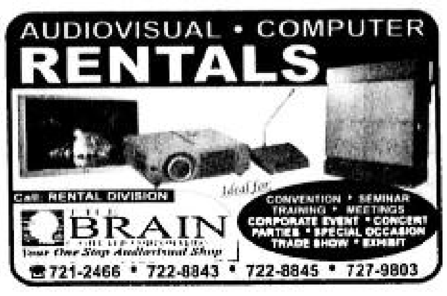


Gov't readies $750-M bond float

As credit market conditions improve

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT is borrowing as much as $750 million from the global bond market to cover expenditures that are beyond its revenue collection for this year.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the bond float, scheduled in the next few days, would be handled by JP Morgan, Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp. and Deutsche Bank as lead underwriters.

The bonds to be offered will mature in 2015 and 2030.

Cruz, who was tasked with implementing the government's foreign borrowing program, said it would initially look at generating $500 million from the bond issue, although it could raise this to $750 million should there be a huge demand for the bonds and should the market offer an attractive price.

The bond float will be the government's second time to tap the international market for financing this year. Its first international bond issue for the year was undertaken in late January when it sold $1.5 billion worth of 25-year bonds. The bond float in January was the Philippines' single biggest issue ever recorded.

The government is set to borrow $4 billion this year from the foreign market to fund the budget deficit, which is estimated to reach P180 billion by year's end, and to pay maturing obligations.

"We have decided to now go into the (international credit) market as it has improved tremendously due to a confluence of events," Cruz said.

The bond launch will come amid final deliberations on the value-added tax (VAT) bill in the bicameral conference committee of Congress.

The Department of Finance earlier said progress and passage of the VAT bill were expected to improve market sentiment on the Philippines because the measure would substantially ease the country's fiscal problem. The bill, if enacted into law, is estimated to generate P60 billion to P80 billion in additional revenues a year.

Arguing that the government was losing at least P167 million for every day of delay in the passage of the VAT, the DOF has called on Congress to finally wrap up discussions on the VAT bill.

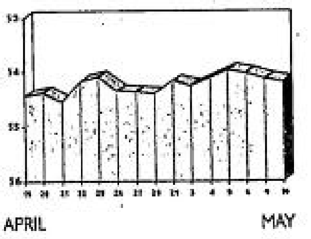
Although there had been a deadlock between the Lower House and the Senate over their opposing versions of the VAT bill, a compromise was struck yesterday morning.

The compromise is to keep the VAT rate at 10 percent, increase corporate income tax rate to 35 percent, and give President Macapagal-Arroyo a standby authority to raise the VAT rate if certain fiscal targets are not met.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



P54.190=$1
As of 5 p.m., May 10, 2005

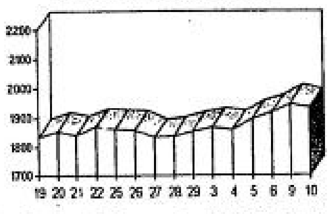
¥105.84=$1
As of 5 p.m., May 10, 2005

GOLD: $426.00-426.50
per ounce Hong Kong, May 10, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares end 0.8% lower on profit taking

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARES ended lower yesterday on profit-taking in stocks such as SM Prime and Bank of the Philippine Islands, following seven sessions of gains, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed down 15.23 points, or 0.8 percent, at 1,931.54, after rising 6.4 percent in the past seven sessions, including Monday's 1.7-percent gain to a one-month closing high of 1,946.77.

AB Capital Securities research director Jose Vistan said investors cashed in on gains after lawmakers earlier yesterday approved the long-awaited final version of the value-added tax law amendments, which is the focal point of the government's fiscal reform program aimed at balancing the budget by 2010.

It was the anticipation of the passage of the amendments that sent stock prices rising in past sessions.

"The passage of the VAT amendments should be taken positively by the market, but with that issue now off the radar, and most first-quarter corporate earnings reports out, the market may be in for a period of boredom," said Vistan.

The market was neutral to the March exports report released shortly before the market opened, which showed export earnings for the month down 2.8 percent on-year due to weaker electronics shipments.

DA Market Securities president Nestor Aguila said investors have

SHARES/ B2

Inflation, taxes weigh on telecom profits

By Clarissa S. Batino

RISING inflation and higher taxes are threatening the profitability of local telecommunication companies and could clip the growth momentum of this sector, according to Globe Telecom Inc.

Globe, a joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom, said it was worried that with inflation hitting more than 8 percent or double what it was two years ago, consumers would be spending less on telecom services.

Increasing taxes, according to Globe president Gerardo Ablaza, would put more pressure directly on telcos' earnings. As higher taxes hit consumers, even less money would be spent on goods and services.

All these were making it increasingly difficult "to see any big burst in revenue," Ablaza pointed out.

Filipinos spent P196 billion for transportation and communication in the first nine months of 2004 compared to P154.5 billion in the same period in 2003 and P131.12 billion in the first three quarters of 2002.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan had said that in 2003, Filipinos spent P93 billion on cellular phone services against only P56 billion on beverages.

Ablaza said he was worried that previous spending habits benefiting the telecom sector might no longer be sustained.

"There is a possibility of increased pressure on consumers arising from higher inflation or higher taxes or both," he said.

The twin threats are coming at a time when the country's best-performing sector is already beset with prospects of declining subscriber take-up and softening sales.

Globe grew its revenues in the first quarter by only 5 percent to P11.9 billion. Ablaza said this trend of slowing growth started in the fourth quarter of 2004 and was also experienced by Globe's competitors.

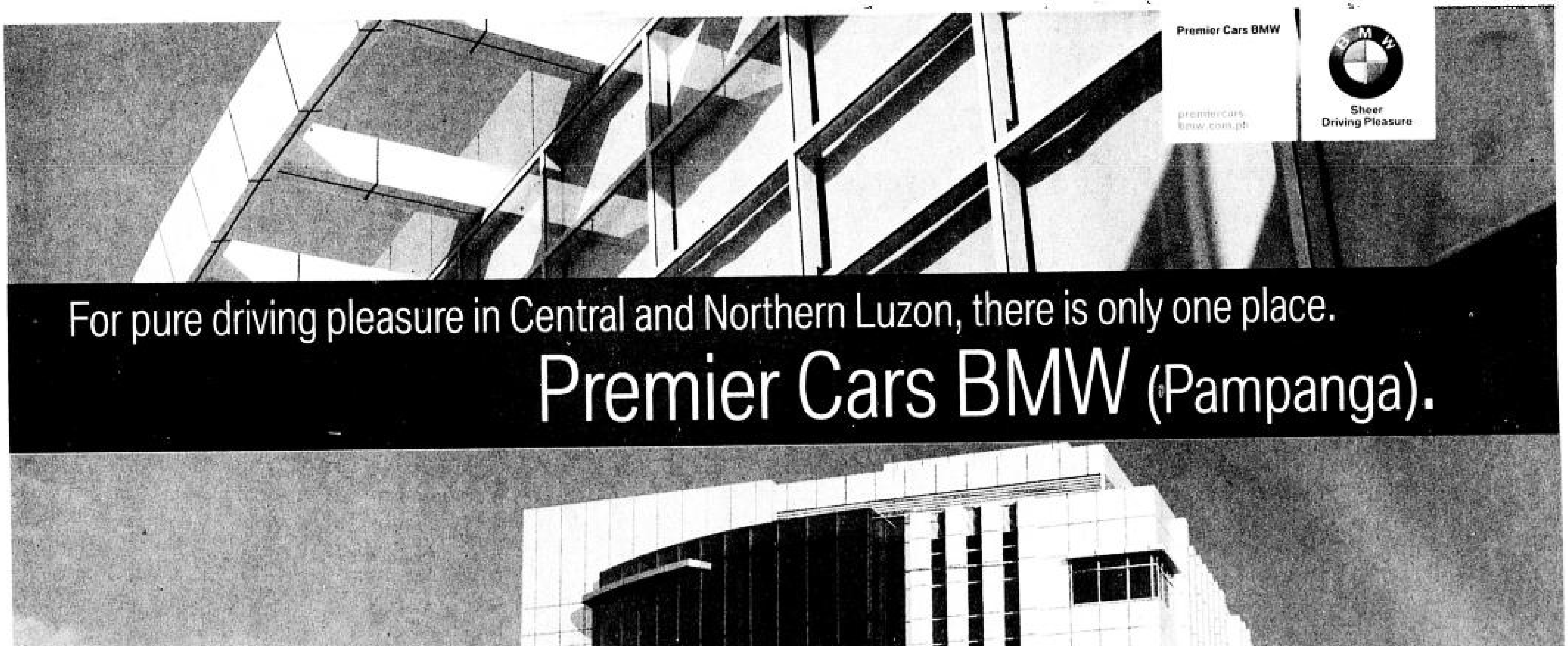
While Smart Communications Inc. increased revenues by about 14 percent to P17.4 billion in the first quarter, this was certainly not on the high double-digit level experienced in previous periods.

"Revenue growth of Smart would remain double-digit, but it would be in the low double-digit. It won't be as we saw before where we were hitting 30 to 40 percent (increases in revenues)," Pangilinan said.

Globe chief financial officer Delfin Gonzalez said the company's revenues would be "muted" by several threats and challenges.

The key now for the telcos would be to manage cost and improve operating efficiency and

INFLATION/ B4



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Manila Water sees no legal snag in buying into rival Maynilad

HK firm sells stake in ₱10-B Slex project

By Clarissa S. Batino

HONG KONG'S Hopewell Holdings Ltd. has sold its remaining 10 percent stake in the P10-billion South Luzon Expressway rehabilitation project to Malaysian firm MTD Capital, according to the head of what used to be Hopewell's local unit.

The Hong Kong company, controlled by tycoon Gordon Wu, in late April sold its remaining 25 million shares in Hopewell Crown Infrastructure Inc. to a group led by the listed Malaysian tollway operator.

Joel Banares, president of Hopewell Crown, said the company would be eventually controlled by MTD Capital and would have to change its name.

For the meantime, Hopewell Crown is finalizing a financial plan that it would present to the board of the Philippine National Construction Corp. on May 20.

Such a plan, according to Banares, should convince the PNCC that the consortium led by MTD Capital has the financial strength to undertake the P10-billion SLEX upgrade and could readily access money from the capital markets.

"The PNCC gave us until May 20 to present a viable financial plan," the Hopewell Crown president said in an interview. "It did not tell us to bring the P10 billion up-front because everybody knows that every project is about 70 percent financed with debt."

Banares added that to raise the 70-percent debt financing for the P10-billion SLEX rehabilitation, the consortium must first secure a Supplemental Toll Operation Agreement (Stoa) with the Toll Regulatory Board.

Without the Stoa, no creditor would lend money to a big-ticket project, he said.

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE UTILITY firm Manila Water Co. Inc. (MWCI) sees no legal stumbling blocks when it gets to acquire a stake in rival Maynilad Water Services Inc. (Maynilad) of the Lopez Group.

Officials of the Ayala-led water firm also pointed out that the move to acquire a stake in Maynilad would not lead to a merger with the rival firm.

"It cannot be a merger," said Antonino Aquino, Manila Water president. "We are covered by two concession agreements and [the water utility] needs to be operated by two companies."

During yesterday's briefing at the stock exchange, Aquino also hinted that if the MWCI and other firms would offer a bid for Maynilad, it would have to be made through a different company.

"On the legal issue, the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel ... said there are no legal impediments [to the planned acquisition]," Aquino added.

According to MWCI, funding for the acquisition may come from its partners.

The water firm will infuse only a small amount of capital, "the magnitude of which has yet to be determined at this point in time," Aquino said.

Aquino said MWCI has enough resources to power its bid for Maynilad. The Ayala-led firm recently raised P3.6 billion from its sale of shares to the public.

Also, MWCI has a credit line worth $50 million with the International Finance Corp. which it has not completely tapped.

Yesterday, MWCI also said that its net earnings grew 57 percent to P484 million in the months of January to March from P309 million in the same period last year.

MWCI managed to cut its water losses and expand its billed volumes which resulted in the growth in earnings.

Its billed volume, or water delivered to customers, grew nine percent in the first quarter to 840 million liters per day from 769 million in the same period last year.

System losses or non-revenue water was also reduced to 40.7 percent in March from 50.9 percent in the same month last year.

MWCI has invested more than P9 billion for capital investments since 1997 and is planning to spend close to P4 billion this year for capital expenditures.

In January, MWCI raised its tariff rate by roughly 30 percent, or around P4 per cubic meter, contributing to its revenue growth.

A consortium of investors led by Manila Water and financial conglomerate ING Group earlier announced its interest in acquiring an equity stake in Maynilad, the operator of the west concession.

In a letter to Maynilad and its shareholders, Benpres Holdings Corp. and the Suez Group, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System as well as Maynilad's creditors, the consortium indicated that it was prepared to undertake the rehabilitation of Maynilad "in general accordance with the basic terms and conditions of the rehabilitation plan."

Chinabank to pay ₱2.5B in dividends

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE CHINA Banking Corp. has declared P2.56 billion in total cash and stock dividends to its shareholders.

The bank, majority controlled by retail tycoon Henry Sy, yesterday announced that the dividends for holders of common shares would be in the form of a 35-percent or P35 per share cash dividend, and a 35-percent stock dividend.

The cash dividend adds up to P1.28 billion for 36.54 million outstanding shares, while the stock dividend also amounts to P1.28 billion for the additional 12.79 million shares at a par value of P100 per share. That would bring the total outstanding stock to 49.33 million shares.

If valued at the P400 per share range, the stock dividends would be worth over P5 billion, raising total stockholders' benefits to well over P6 billion.

With the bank's equity base hitting the P20-billion milestone, shareholders also approved during its recent annual meeting the increase in the bank's authorized capital stock from P5 billion to P10 billion. The move is subject to the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Philippine Stock Exchange and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The dividends and capital hike follows China Bank's three consecutive years of record profits averaging about P2.6 billion.

China Bank chair Gilbert Dee also announced that the bank's audited net income reached P2.7 billion in 2004, or an earnings per share of P74.37, compared to the previous year's P2.616 billion or P71.60 per share.

This positive performance of the Bank was attributed to broad-based expansion across the bank's businesses, mainly growth in customer lending and continued growth in the deposit base.

The bank's resulting return on equity as of end-2004 remained one of the highest in the industry at 14.37 percent, while return on assets also stood an an industry high of 2.46 percent.

Its non-performing loan ratio improved to 11.40 percent for 2004, down from 14.69 percent a year ago.

China Bank's loan loss coverage ratio (ratio of loss reserves to NPLs) improved to 81.33 percent, the highest among local banks, as the P855 million in loss provision for the year brought the total loan loss reserves to P6.25 billion.

Its total resources stood at P113.86 billion, above the P103.35 billion of the previous year.

Total deposits hit P85.81 billion while total loans reached P57.26 billion, an increase of P11.89 billion from 2003.

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DISCLOSURES

CHEMICAL Industries of the Philippines Inc. rescheduled their annual stockholders' meeting from May 3 to July 7 due to the request of Philippine Indochem Corp. and Chemholdings Corp.

***

LMG Chemicals Corp. rescheduled their annual stockholders' meeting from May 3 to July 7 due to the request of some of its stockholders/directors and to synchronize the meeting with CIP (parent-company).

***

SALCON Power Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 31, 9:30 a.m. at the Manila Polo Club Inc. No. 17 Mackinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of April 29 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

***

KEPPEL Philippines Properties Inc. rescheduled their annual stockholders' meeting from June 16 to June 30 due to the unavailability of the President and/or Chairman who will preside the meeting.

***

LORENZO Shipping Corp. changed the venue of the annual stockholders meeting on June 7 from Dusit Hotel, Makati City to Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

***

WELLEX Industries Inc. (WIN) denied having any information that could explain the 40-percent decrease in its share price that dropped from P0.20 to P0.12 per share. *Compiled by Chona Galang, PDI Research*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 10, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.6	4	3.6	3.9	20,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	28.5	28.5	28	28	1,344,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50.5	50.5	49	49.5	1,364,300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.67	0.67	1,200,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47.5	47.5	46.5	47	188,100
International Exch. Bank	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	39,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33	33	32	33	495,200
Phil. Savings Bank	32.5	33.5	32.5	33.5	9,300
Security Bank Corp.	28	28	27.5	27.5	124,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	28.5	29.5	28	28	70,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2450	2450	2440	2440	860
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1.02	1	1.02	43,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1695	1695	1690	1690	760
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	9,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.16	2,431,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	3	3	3	3	5,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	855	855	845	850	22,850
Ipeople Inc.	4.2	4.2	3.95	3.95	338,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.049	400,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	150,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2	2	2	2	86,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.45	3.5	3.35	3.35	4,132,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	40,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1430	1440	1430	1435	120,630
Ivantage Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	1,590,000
Philweb Corp.	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	84,400,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.5	17.5	17	17	20,000
Manila Electric Co. B	25	25.5	24.5	24.75	847,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.1	6.2	6	6	4,659,000
Petron Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	2,387,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	142,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	320,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.8	7.8	7.5	7.6	5,553,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	55,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.69	3,130,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.45	3.5	4,844,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	8,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	25,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	134,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29.5	29.5	28.5	29.5	128,000
RFM Corp.	0.83	0.83	0.82	0.82	230,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58	57.5	58	42,000
San Miguel Corp. B	85	85	85	85	400,500
Universal Robina Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.5	334,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	14,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	15,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.2	2,991,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	50,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	1,190,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.033	6,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.1	2.16	2.1	2.1	1,100,000
APC Group Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.29	0.3	940,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	160,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	25,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.5	9,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.02	1.02	9,768,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	80,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	1,410,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.33	4,790,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.75	2.75	1,597,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.033	3,500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.3	1.3	180,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	8.7	8.7	8.3	8.4	709,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	50.5	50.5	49	49.5	933,800
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.095	0.095	0.0875	0.0925	900,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.2	1.32	1.2	1.32	300,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.35	3.35	90,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.38	1.42	1,248,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	51,240,000
Polar Property Holdings	2	2	2	2	20,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	50,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	140,000
Sm Investments Corp.	250	250	249	250	274,470
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	5,600,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	10,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	500,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	12,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	280,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.2	9,239,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.5	11,895,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.33	5,650,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	80,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series K	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	5,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.1	8.2	8	8.1	7,363,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	850,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	5,340,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	220,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.39	0.39	15,390,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.69	0.78	0.69	0.78	104,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.58	1.62	19,417,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	8,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	940,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	300,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	2,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	1,870,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.5	7.3	7.4	9,818,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.7	0.75	0.7	0.75	160,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	58,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.7	207,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.6	9.6	9.2	9.2	103,000
Benguet Corp. B	45	45	45	45	3,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	3,860,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.022	11,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	109,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.96	0.96	0.93	0.93	240,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.12	1.12	1.08	1.08	1,211,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	34	34	32	32	256,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.22	0.24	0.21	0.24	310,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	4,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	23,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	80,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.165	0.165	5,750,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.3	0.3	0.3	.0.3	400,000

CURRENCIES

May 10, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.778331	1.000000	54.1410
Japan	Yen	0.007370	0.009469	0.5127
United Kingdom	Pound	1.466687	1.884400	102.0233
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099830	0.128261	6.9442
Switzerland	Franc	0.646025	0.830013	44.9377
Canada	Dollar	0.628904	0.808016	43.7468
Singapore	Dollar	0.473409	0.608236	32.9305
Australia	Dollar	0.601121	0.772320	41.8142
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.064594	2.652590	143.6139
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207555	0.266667	14.4376
Brunei	Dollar	0.471973	0.606391	32.8306
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000106	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.019697	0.025307	1.3701
UAE	Dirham	0.211923	0.272279	14.7415
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.284800	69.5604
Argentina	Peso	0.269086	0.345722	18.7177
Brazil	Real	0.317907	0.408447	22.1137
Denmark	Kroner	0.134387	0.172661	9.3480
India	Rupee	0.017909	0.023010	1.2458
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204851	0.263193	14.2495
Mexico	New Peso	0.071022	0.091249	4.9403
New Zealand	Dollar	0.567959	0.729714	39.5074
Norway	Kroner	0.123325	0.158448	8.5785
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013079	0.016804	0.9098
South Africa	Rand	0.127006	0.163177	8.8346
Korea	Won	0.000778	0.000999	0.0541
Sweden	Kroner	0.108961	0.139993	7.5794
Syria	Pound	0.014994	0.019264	1.0430
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024922	0.032020	1.7336
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000363	0.000466	0.0252

Shares end 0.8% . . .

From page B1

long since known that a slowdown in electronics demand was in the offing this year. Likewise, he also noted a shift in services exports in terms of the main export revenue source.

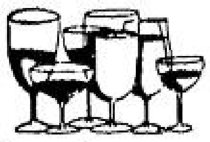
Among the stocks that succumbed to profit-taking were SM Prime, down 1.3 percent at P7.40; BPI, off 3.9 percent at P49.50, and First Philippine Holdings, lower by one percent at P49.50.

Blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. closed unchanged at P1,435, after trading higher for most of the session.

AP

Pacific crossings

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

THE BATTLE over Pacific Plans has crossed oceans, with irate plan holders starting an e-mail brigade to protest next week's conferment by the University of San Francisco of an honorary degree on taipan Alfonso Yuchengco.

It is not immediately clear what degree will be conferred on the former ambassador but apparently the proposed honor is in recognition of his generosity that enabled the Jesuit school to establish a Yuchengco Philippine Studies Program.

Yuchengco, who is a member of the USF board, will be the main speaker at the May 20 graduation ceremonies of the school's McLaren College of Business, when the honorary degree will also be awarded.

Despite his recent quintuple (not quadruple as earlier reported here) heart bypass operation, the 82-year-old former diplomat is pushing through with his USF commitment and has apparently obtained his doctors' approval to make the 12-hour trans-Pacific flight.

The Philippine Studies Program was established in the name of the taipan's late daughter, Maria Elena, a USF alumna, with an undisclosed amount of donation given by the taipan in 1999 to help the university pursue its mission of "Educating Minds and Hearts to Change the World."

According to the pacificnoplans.blogspot.com, the e-mail brigade will bombard USF officials with appeals and news stories about the Pacific Plans fiasco, in an attempt to embarrass the taipan and pressure him to honor his company's educational plan commitments.

This Saturday, another forum has been scheduled by Pacific Plans at the Philippine International Convention Center in a new attempt, after Saturday's walkout by mutinous plan holders, to explain why the country's first pre-need company had to seek court-approved rehabilitation.

Shortly before filing for rehabilitation, Pacific Plans had already obtained approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission to convert its 34,000 open-ended plans into fixed value contracts with an 8-percent interest compounded earnings.

But in the Makati RTC petition, Pacific Plans instead sought court approval to have the plans' interest earnings reduced to 7 percent.

Money-go-round

- TAIPAN George Ty is going big-time with his unlisted real estate venture, Federal Land, and has decided to itself develop the 10-hectare property in The Fort his Metrobank acquired by way of *dacion en pago* from the Metro Pacific Group.
- FILIPINAS, the San Francisco-based magazine, has a new owner in the person of ad executive Greg Macabenta, after pioneering publisher Mona Lisa Yuchengco, who

COCKTALES/ B4

Philamlife nets P2.9B in '04

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philamlife), the biggest insurer in the country, posted a net profit of P2.9 billion in 2004 on the back of a record P12.3 billion in premium income.

The net profit, however, were lower than the P3.5 billion in recurring profit last year.

For this year, Philamlife president and CEO Jose Cuisia Jr. said the company should grow its business by about 10-15 percent despite the many challenges arising from an expected slowdown in economic growth as well as the uptrend in inflation.

Cuisia added: "The situation in the pre-need industry may cause some anxiety. We hope that the situation can be addressed by the regulators so that the sector can get back on its feet."

He said competition was also expected to be tighter not only with other insurers with the banks, which were offering some similar products but with less restrictions.

For instance, he said the unit investment trust funds being promoted by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas were enjoying certain advantages over mutual funds, including tax and regulatory benefits. UITFs are not slapped with reserve requirements, are exempted from the documentary stamp tax and have less regulatory constraints.

At end-2004, Philamlife reported a 21-percent rise in premium income to P12.3 billion while gross revenues and total assets reached record highs of P20.8 billion and P88.9 billion, respectively. Total invested assets amounted to P84.6 billion.

Cuisia noted that the group's new business grew by 48 percent in 2004,

PHILAMLIFE/ B4

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WATER FOR THE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

For MWCI, doing good is good for business

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CORPORATE CITIZEN

IT IS a scene that occurs too often for comfort.

Every night, Fely Griarte and her neighbors would line up with their jerry cans to collect water they badly need from the one public faucet.

That single faucet would serve over 2,000 families in Blocks 37-39 Welfareville, Barangay Addition Hills in Mandaluyong City. There the water would usually flow for a few hours, from late night to early morning.

Since the water was never enough, urban poor residents like Griarte would end up paying water vendors over P100 per cubic meter, which was over seven times what ordinary residents with piped-in water pay for the precious resource.

Manila Water Co. Inc. thought it unjust for the poorest residents of the city to pay so much for a basic commodity. It immediately launched its Tubig Para Sa Barangay (Water for the Community), its flagship project for the community, soon after it won the concession to distribute water in the east zone of Metro Manila.

Water straight to their homes

Under the program, Manila Water provided the infrastructure to bring water straight into the homes of the informal dwellers.

For most residents, it was the first time they had water running out of their own faucets. There would be no more waiting in line for these residents.

Joel Lacsamana, corporate communications head of MWCI, said in an interview that the company made it easy for the residents to get piped water as MWCI charges them a much lower connection cost, which can be paid in installments.

The residents also contribute to bringing costs down by helping in the construction. Knowing that they had a hand in completing the distribution network also made them better stewards of the facilities.

100-percent collection rate

"We are proud to say that we have a 100-percent collection rate in the Patubig program, which we can't say for others," Lacsamana says.

From the 10,000 households serviced during the first year of the program in 1998, the Tubig Para Sa Barangay program has now benefited over 700,000 households.

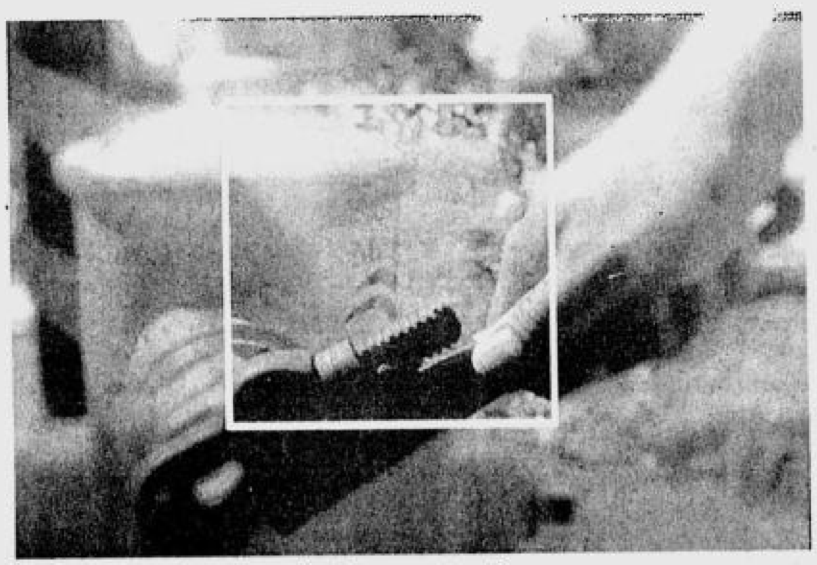
By the end of the year, MWCI is looking to push the number to over 120,000 households.

MWCI did not stop at just providing water.

Since the informal settlers now have water piped directly into their homes, the residents—especially the women—now have more time on their hands to pursue other activities, such as livelihood training through Manila Water's Kabuhayan Para sa Barangay (Livelihood for the Community) program.

Small loans were made available to deserving residents, which they used to open their own street stalls and food outlets.

THE PATUBIG Para sa Barangay project of Manila Water Co. Inc. has benefited over 700,000 households.



FOR MWCI, development and project can go together

Toward sustainable development

Initial funding was provided by the Bank of the Philippine Islands, with support from the International Finance Corp., the private investment arm of the World Bank.

To complete the development package, Manila Water is now putting together a Sanitasyon Para Sa Barangay (Sanitation for the Community) program.

Antonino T. Aquino, MWCI president, said in an interview that these programs were in line with the company's effort toward sustainable development.

"We are one of the few companies that have been able to ensure that there is a goal congruence between sustainable development and our own business goals," Aquino said. "We find them to be perfectly aligned. By doing these efforts we are able to make the company progress further."

He cited the experience of Tubig Para Sa Barangay which, by helping poor customers get access to water, MWCI was also able to increase its volume of billed water, thus bringing down water that is lost to pilferage and illegal connections.

Improving the bottomline

Another example is MWCI's use of small-scale entrepreneurs to provide services, such as sending out bills and laying the pipes. Not only was MWCI able to support some 10,000 families through the program, it was also able to get the services at a cost lower than what it would have to pay if it hired big service companies.

These and other development programs are contained in MWCI's Sustainability Report 2004, the first of a series of annual reports that will outline MWCI's policy commitments in areas such as water availability, water treatment, energy efficiency, sanitation, community development, human resources management and corporate governance.

"We have a mindset that says doing all these sustainability initiatives even improves directly your bottomline," Aquino said. "The objectives of helping the community and the company are both met. More have to accept that doing good is ultimately good for business."

Fely Griarte, and others like her, certainly agree.

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DR. NED ROBERTO, PhD is one of Asia's leading authorities on marketing. He is a much sought after consultant, speaker, author, and educator. He has taught at De La Salle University in Manila, Northwestern University in Chicago and INSEAD in France. He was professor of International Marketing at the Asian Institute of Management for 29 years. In 1983, he received the Philippine Marketing Association's Agora Award for Marketing Education, and in 2004, he was awarded the 1st Lifetime Achievement Award as Marketing Educator by the Philippine Association of Marketing Educators.

Dr. Roberto has consulted and conducted in-house seminars for Fortune 500 companies in the U.S., Europe, and Asia such as Procter & Gamble, Citibank, McCann-Erickson, Nestle, AC Nielsen, etc. He is the author (with Philip Kotler) of Social Marketing, which has been translated into seven languages, as well as the best-selling User-Friendly Marketing Research and several other books and countless papers on marketing.

Dr. Roberto earned his MBA and PhD in Marketing at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business.

PDI-5-11-05

Inflation, taxes . . .

From page B1

productivity. One area that both Globe and Smart were looking at would be to end the costly and damaging SIM swaps.

The two major players vowed to stop the SIM swap offers this month in the hope that they would generate savings and finally give a more accurate picture of the number of wireless subscribers in the country.

Experts believed that 3-4 million subscribers jump from one network to another through the SIM swap to take advantage of the free P50 load.

"With the SIM swap hopefully taking a permanent leave, we shall see real subscriber growth numbers and also more normal levels of churn," Ablaza said.

Smart said it ended the first quarter with 20.2 million customers, while Globe had 12.9 million and Sun Cellular, 1.7 million.

Each SIM costs about $2.50 (P140) plus P50 in free load. An activated SIM also has costs to the network. At P200 each, the 3 to 4 million subscribers were costing the giants close to P1 billion in additional expenses almost each month.

Pangilinan said that the industry should really end the SIM swap because it could have been artificially swelling the subscriber picture.

"The SIM swap had been introducing fluffiness in terms of subscriber number. We are encouraging the industry to stop the SIM swap because while it generates activity, it had not been generating revenue but had actually been an expense," he added.

Cocktales

From page B3

started the monthly glossy way back in 1989 and who certainly does not need the money, decided that it was time to move on.

Macabenta already owns an advertising-driven Fil-Am paper, also based in the City by the Bay.

● MORGAN Stanley, which just received a Department of Finance mandate to float $2 billion in bonds using the dollar balances of local Philippine banks as security, has contracted the proprietary financial technology from Smetrix Financial Ltd., a Hong Kong-financial company whose principals include former Wall Street Filipino investment bankers Renan Paglin and Gamaliel Pascual, as well as Asian Spirit chair Noel Onate.

Heard through the grapevine

THE TOP-END condos in The Fort have joined the stallholders of Market! Market! in what appears to be a growing water rate revolt within the exclusive community.

The water bill for luxury condos have gone up from P60.66 per cubic meter in 2001 to P144 per cu.m. in 2005, in contrast to the average P16.82 per cu.m. currently being charged to non-Fort residents.

The condo owners are especially hit hard since their bills are computed based on the occupied floor area of the building, instead of actual water consumption.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Philamlife nets P2.9B in '04

From page B3

principally from bancassurance operations (which contributed P1.2 billion in premiums), agency sales growth in Metro Manila and the provinces, as well as significant sales performances of its key market segments.

He said Philamlife's niche market included high net worth individuals, Filipino-Chinese entrepreneurs and overseas Filipino workers.

Meanwhile, the group's net investment income, including equity income from non-traditional investments and realized capital gains, reached P7.46 billion. He said the company paid P1.4 billion in taxes to the government in 2004.

Philamlife consistently ranked No. 1 in the industry in terms of revenues, premium, assets, investments and net income.

"As the market leader for over half a century, Philamlife has faithfully delivered on its promises to generations of Filipino families," he said.

In 2004, P4.7 billion in benefits were paid to policyholders, representing a 24-percent increase from the previous year, while scholar education benefits paid amounted to P274.3 million or 27 percent higher compared to 2003.

Cuisia also cited the ongoing release of P165 million representing Philamlife's scholar education benefits beginning May 2005.

Since 2000, more than P1 billion worth of benefits has been paid to its scholar policyholders.

Gov't plan to hold on to Malampaya stake seen to benefit RP

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to hold off on the sale of its 10-percent stake in the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project could bring in more money for the government in the long run.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla justified the decision of the Privatization Council to indefinitely shelve the Malampaya stake sale by saying that the country was better off keeping the stake, than selling half as originally planned.

"It appears that we will be better off holding on to the asset than privatizing it, as what we will be earning from this investment will be much higher than the interest rates that we'll have to pay," he told reporters in a recent interview.

Selling the Philippine National Oil Co. Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC)'s interest in Malampaya was one of the conditions that the national government set for the state firm in 1999 when it guaranteed the $175-million loan that PNOC-EC took out to purchase its 10-percent stake in the project.

PNOC-EC president Eduardo Mañalac said in an earlier interview that part of the sale proceeds would also be used to fund more exploration activities that would help the country attain 60-percent energy self-sufficiency level by 2010.

However, after accepting the offer of a Korean group to buy its 4.9-percent stake in the Malampaya natural gas find, PNOC-EC suddenly changed its mind and rejected the offer.

PNOC-EC general counsel Elpidio Gamboa Jr. had earlier said that the Privatization Council realized that the offer of the LG International Corp. (LGI)-led consortium was already below current market prices.

"The Privatization Council noted that the price offered to PNOC-EC by LGI for the subject interest was no longer reflective of the current oil price," he said.

The PNOC and PNOC-EC boards and the Privatization Council in late March approved the sale of almost half of PNOC-EC's 10-percent stake in the Malampaya natural gas project in Palawan to the LGI consortium.

However, before the sale could be consummated, the Privatization Council gave Malampaya consortium members Shell Philippines Exploration BV (Spex) and Chevron Texaco Malampaya the chance to challenge LGI's offer.

Early last month, Spex and Chevron Texaco decided to make their own offer for the 4.9-percent Malampaya stake that PNOC-EC was selling.

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Pacific Plans wants to rebuild business, raise equity to ₱1B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED firm Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI) may raise its equity as much as P1 billion over the next four years, said Ernesto C. Garcia, PPI president.

According to Garcia, the increase in equity will enable PPI to rebuild its business and even acquire a new distribution network from other pre-need firms, once a regional trial court approves its rehabilitation plan.

The pre-need firm proposes to build up its capital by issuing P300 million worth of convertible preferred shares to possible investors.

PPI may also invite an investor to infuse roughly P500 million in the company in exchange for equity in the pre-need firm.

"We made a commitment that this term's enrollment will happen," Garcia said in a press conference Monday at the Kimpura restaurant in Greenhills. "Our commitment is to serve plan holders. We will work with plan holders. Efforts won't stop after the rehabilitation plan. We will continue to look at ways on how students can continue to enroll."

Taipan Alfonso Yuchengco earlier pledged to sink P250 million in PPI to reassure plan holders that the pre-need firm would be able to cover its tuition liabilities this year.

PPI has also been in talks with local universal banks and the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. to set up a P300-million fund, which will be used to buy back the converted fixed-value plans of its plan holders under the firm's money-back program.

In April, PPI claimed that it had run out of cash and might not be able to pay future claims. It then petitioned the Makati regional trial court to allow it to suspend payment of its obligations and undergo rehabilitation.

At present, PPI said it could only pay P341 million for the current enrollment period.

In its petition for rehabilitation, PPI's obligation to availing plan holders runs to about P350 million for the May to June 2005 enrollment period.

PPI has 34,000 plan holders, 15,000 of whom would be filing their educational claims for the schoolyear 2005-2006.

PPI is also offering to return its planholders' payments by issuing fixed-value plans.

Food processors urged to comply with standards

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE CENTER for International Trade Expositions and Missions yesterday urged local food processors and manufacturers to strictly comply with new global compliance standards to expand export markets.

Citem officials said failure to do so would scare off the consumers in the global markets who have become increasingly careful about what they eat.

Citem officials said food publications and experts all over the world were echoing a possible threat that "whole categories of food products run the risk of being avoided and profit margins could plunge if consumer confidence is lost."

Citem has organized the 1st IFEX Philippines Symposium being held at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila in Malate to alert food processors to the new standards and trends overseas.

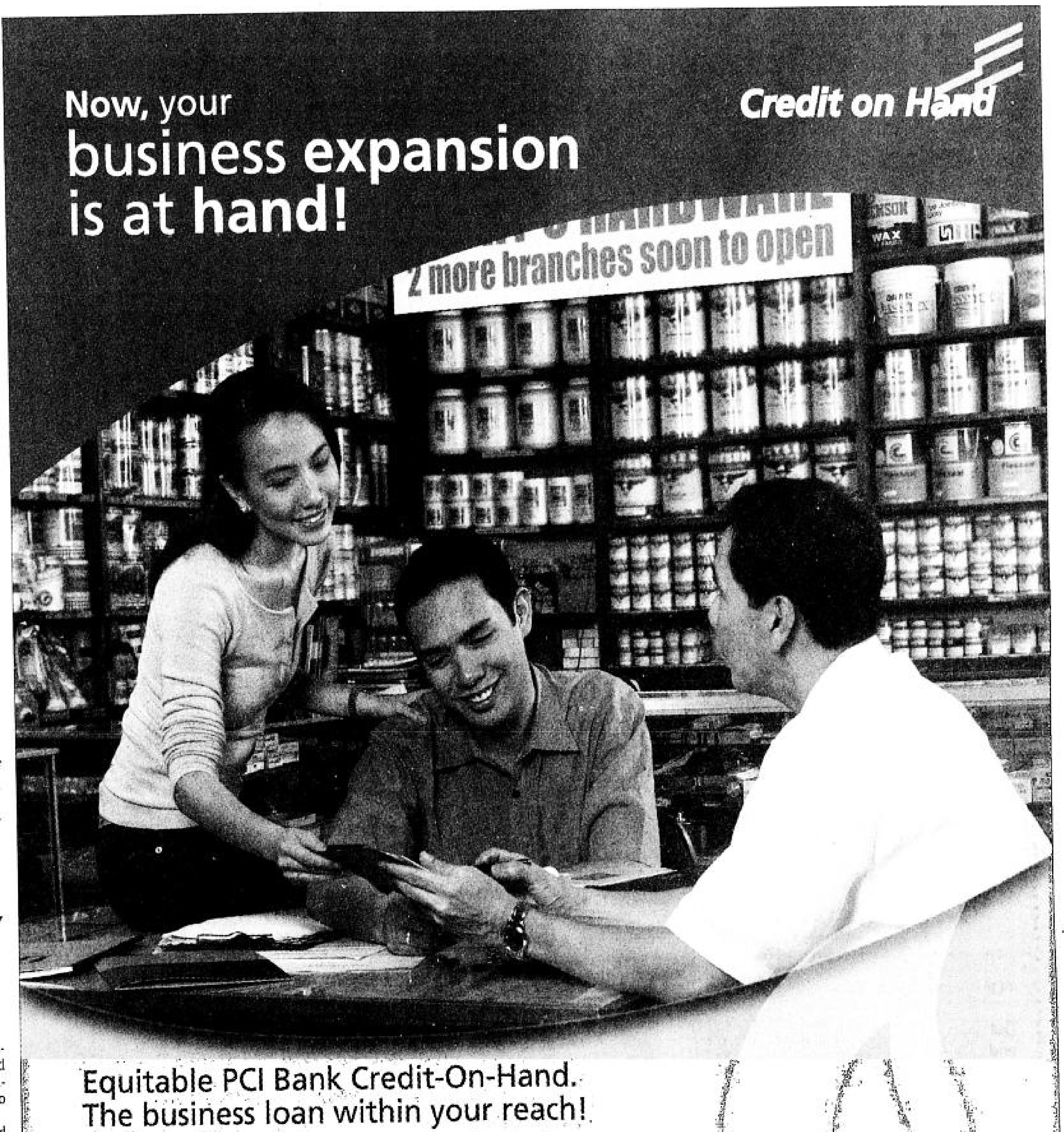
The event aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the global market through reports provided by experts based in major markets like the United States, the European Union and the Middle East.

Topics to be discussed include the system of entry and inspection of Philippine food in the US; the EU directives on the importation of Philippine food products; the impact of Saudi Arabian food standards on Philippine food exports, and the halal standards and requirements of the United Arab Emirates.

In a related development, the Malaysian government is holding next week a seminar and exhibition on halal food production in its embassy in Makati City.

The halal trade show is part of Malaysia's efforts to widen its source of halal imports and help Filipino exporters improve their know-how of production as well as the halal market in region and the rest of the world.

With about a billion Muslims worldwide, the global halal food market is valued at an estimated $150 billion a year. Revenues from local halal exports was estimated to have reached $50 million in 2004.



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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
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Campus minister helps develop spirituality of future professionals

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

CAREER TALES

SCHOOL is where kids go to learn their ABC's and master computing their XYZ's. But in most Catholic schools like the Ateneo de Naga University in Naga City, they make sure that the students are not only mentally developed but spiritually nourished as well. "We have a lot of tasks that are geared towards leading students into a level of personal maturity in terms of their psycho-spiritual life. This is rooted in the Catholic nature of the university itself. Actually, we work within the premise of the school mission that is to form men and women integrally," explains Victor Dennis Nierva, program coordinator for communication and training of the Campus of Ministry of Ateneo de Naga University.

Spiritual nourishment is not as simple as conducting the occasional retreat and recollection. Spiritual formation, for the Campus of Ministry of Ateneo in Naga, is all about developing the person as a whole to achieve spirituality and well-being. This heavy responsibility lies on Nierva. He handles projects related to leadership development, personality growth, sexuality, social justice, arts, current issues and even politics. "These things, though not religious, affect our spiritual life. In my program, these issues are given light," claims the campus minister.

Multimedia campaigns

Ateneo de Naga University believes that they cannot help a person mature in his psycho-spiritual life through religious encounters alone. In its aim to help the students develop fully in every aspect, Ateneo conducts programs that stimulate young minds in many ways. Stimulation comes in the form of seminars, presentations, gatherings, congresses, symposia, forums, lectures, contests and celebrations. Most of these projects fall under Nierva's department. Most of the projects that are not religious by nature are passed to him. "We have this joke around here that if they don't know where the program should be placed, it goes to me," shares Nierva with a chuckle.

To promote his campaign, Nierva takes advantage of technology. However, in spite of the resources available, the responsibility does not come without challenges. "On the communication aspect, it's really challenging knowing that in the age of InfoTech, traditional and conventional ways of information dissemination fail, even on a small-scale level like the university." He says that people no longer pay attention to photocopied materials announcing a forum or a lecture. For this reason, the innovative Nierva often deviates from the usual ways.

Schooling of desires

To create captivating campaigns for all his programs, Nierva takes advantage of the different forms of media. Aside from the traditional brochures, posters, pamphlets, flyers and streamers, he also resorts to the office webpage and video documentaries. He also reaches audiences beyond the campus through his voice. With his eloquence and his deep commanding voice, Nierva hosts a radio program, sponsored by the school, which airs every Saturday evening on a Catholic radio station in Naga.

Nierva explains that it is essential that the special programs he implements instill awareness among the members of the community on the University's position on identified Church and faith-related issues. He says that every issue he tackles in his programs is "Christocentric." For this reason, "one can never be a campus minister if he or she is not a person of desires, without the awareness of being called to do a particular task. There is something that we want, that is why we are there, and that desire fans the fire of our vocation—I don't mean religious life per se, but life's direction," explains the campus ministry program coordinator. For this, campus ministers undergo a process called "schooling of desires."

Aside from the basic requirement of the desire to serve, almost any background could prepare a person for the vocation of campus ministry. At the Ateneo de Naga University Campus Ministry, people come from diverse fields of discipline from biology to theology. Nierva holds a degree in Communication Development from the Ateneo de Naga University. He is also currently taking some units for his master of professional education in development education. Those interested in campus ministry may now look into degrees and certificates that offer specialization in the field. In fact, Nierva discloses that Ateneo and some Catholic institutions offer related studies.

For special programs, creativity and a certain kind of boldness play a great role. According to the program coordinator, in a time when anything remotely religious is most often viewed by the youth as banal, one has to be creative and unconventional in his approach. He says he had to train himself in the art of digital video editing. Nierva is also proficient in software and systems like Photoshop and Dreamweaver to be able to attract the attention of his targeted audience. For the radio program, he has mastered the use of CoolEdit, a system used in radio broadcasting.

Finally, a campus minister also needs to be a people person. "*Ignatian cura personalis*—care for the individual person. To be a campus minister is to be open to people coming to you: asking for help, needing ears that will listen to them, to their simple triumphs and even to their deepest woes. To be a campus minister is to accept the person that you are, your strengths and weaknesses, your joys as well as your worries—to be the real you."

Exploration and formation

Nierva once left the humble life of the ministry to explore other possibilities in the big city. After a few years, his exploration eventually brought him back to the same path. This time, the old trodden path led to a different kind of journey, the journey of self-exploration. "It is a work of never-ending exploration of the self: to live the Ignatian ideal of the *magis*—the more, the *tantum quantum*—as much so much. What can I give more? How can I give more? Here, the spirit is always shaken; that is why I think I love this job. Whatever you can give, there is a place for it; there is a need for it."

NIERVA

A dynamic job, Nierva claims it is never easy. Often he finds himself asking "Why do this thing?" or "Is it important for the ministry?" There's always the element of uncertainty and so the necessity to carefully discern he claims. But in spite of the questions, Nierva knows he is in the right place. In the campus, where he is often found buried in campaign materials or listening to troubled students in a recollection, he knows he is in the process of solidifying his dreams into reality. "It is a process that is so constant that everyday my goal in life is becoming more and more clear. It's so fulfilling that I find myself being formed by my efforts to help form others too."

While within the four walls of the classroom the students are being trained to be engineers, teachers, nurses, scientists, lawyers, businessmen, Nierva and the rest of the campus ministry take care of their other needs. "In the spiritual formation activities and other programs we provide them, we aim to add some adjectives to their chosen careers: honorable engineers, loving teachers, compassionate nurses, life-nurturing scientists, impartial lawyers, fair-minded businessmen—men and women working with their hearts and spirits."

(Send feedback to candyvillanueva@pldtdsl.net.*)*

'I can't go to Mass because of my job'

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I HAVE worked in a call center in the night shift for over a year now. My problem is I am not able to practice my faith such as going to Mass regularly. At the end of my shift on Sundays, I am so tired, I am not able to go to Mass. I used to be an active member of a Christian community feeling truly good about my involvement. Often, I ask myself if I should endure all this simply for a job. A lot of my companions do not care to practice their faith anymore.

I am aware that as a person with no prior work experience, job opportunities are limited. My parents tell me I should be thankful I landed a job in a call center that offers double the minimum wage. I am also grateful for the extensive training I received. I have also developed close friends among the customer agents.

Please help me. I am confused.

Faith Starved

I can empathize with your problem. If you are a person who goes to Mass regularly and suddenly this is not possible for you, surely the adjustment can pose a challenge. When I go overseas to do consultancy work, I miss terribly this typical manner of launching my day. This dilemma may require changing your paradigm in terms of the practice of your faith. Realize that your every action and service, even your words as you talk to customers, if done with the right attitude and disposition, can be a practice of your faith. In fact, what is important is to do your best on the job.

Many studies have been done on the positive impact of spirituality in the workplace. More and more people are looking not just for income but also for meaning at work. Oftentimes, simply focusing on social activities to motivate people is no longer enough. They look for something beyond the material.

You may wish to approach your team leader or your human resource manager if he or she can make a proposal to management. Holy Mass can be arranged and held in the office premises before the start or end of shifts Saturday or Sunday. In this manner, you will be able to go to Mass at least once a week. I am sure your other colleagues will appreciate the gesture.

Your parents are right. You have to cultivate the spirit of gratitude and appreciate the blessing of your current job. However, if at a certain point you discover the situation is becoming intolerable for you, then you have to make a value-based decision. Consider the pros and cons of your situation, weigh your alternatives well and make a sound decision.

Meantime, give your best to your job. Let every action become an offering, a concrete practice of your faith. God bless.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.*)*

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

What are you doing the rest of your life?

By Suzie H. Arcenas

WORK can be engrossing. To some, work is their life. They do not plan for life after employment. Even in normal retirement at age 60, we seldom plan ahead.

This is risky for in today's day and age, when the companies we work for can be the subject of a merger or acquisition, we can no longer tell how long we can keep our jobs. We also need to be prepared in case we lose our jobs as a result of early or scheduled retirement. After all, this could mean 20 or more years ahead. Without proper preparation and anticipation, losing a job as a consequence of early or scheduled retirement can be traumatic. We can be stuck in the narrow definition of our past job. The more dependent we are on our employer or on the work environment, the more difficult it will be to set ourselves free for what can be an exciting world out there.

Major transition

If you have reached midlife, you are about to experience a major transition in your career. It is a good time for reflection and decision-making. Do you continue on the same career path or is now the time to consider retirement? Some of us do not have the choice. Declining sales and profitability is forcing companies to implement early retirement programs. Those who are at these crossroads know the sleepless nights and restless days brought by this life-altering event. Fortunately, some progressive companies have taken measures to help their employees move on in a gentler, kinder manner.

Today, the end of a career is not what it used to be—a source of embarrassment and despair. Retirement is no longer seen as a period of idleness and leisure. It has evolved into a period of rebirth, a time for trying a new challenge, exploring interests, creating a business, working as a volunteer, or a combination of all these.

Successful retirement

To address these concerns, Drake Beam Morin (DBM) has created an innovative program called Retirement Success. The program draws on DBM's long experience in providing career counseling to people in Australia and the US. Since DBM started in the Philippines four years ago, it has assisted managers, office staff and plant workers to find new beginnings.

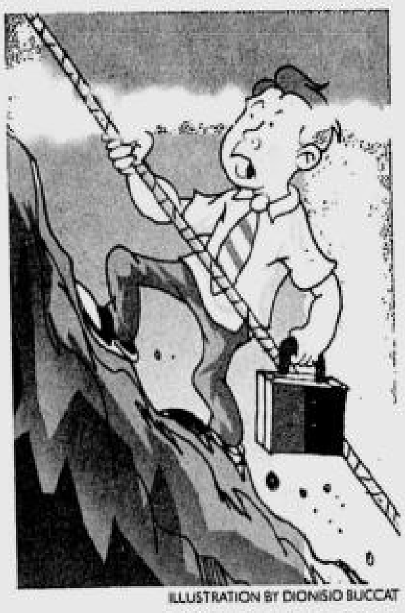
ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

To cite some interesting cases of transitions: a midlife executive who moved from the corporate world to be a chef/owner of a fine dining restaurant; a CEO who downshifted his ambition to become a professor in a small college; a stockbrokerage manager who left a lucrative job to manage an elementary school; a marketing executive of luxury brands who traveled to learn Chinese history and the Mandarin language.

Such interesting life choices could very well be the subject of a book entitled "What Should I Do With My Life?" This could also include the success stories of former factory workers who were empowered by former employers to become successful entrepreneurs through DBM. By hiring DBM to provide technical and emotional support, these companies provided assistance beyond the gold watch and financial settlement. The employees honor their companies with gratitude; some even welcome the temporary adversity as a sign to become independent businessmen and women.

These are real men and women who have responded to their individual calling, after experiencing the DBM career transition and special workshops. Their mature outlook and inner explorations led them to their calling.

Life's mission

DBM Philippines believes everyone has a calling. Everyone is called to fulfill a purpose. Your mission in life is more than just a job or career. You are called to make a life that allows you to contribute what you alone can do. You are not merely called to a job; you are called to a life. The workshop is based on each individual's uniqueness, which is essential to finding your own genuine voice. Therefore, a career transition program should be viewed as an optimistic process to help you find your true direction, after the shock of a redundant job and retirement.

One 55-year-old participant commented that through a DBM workshop, he has mastered the art of living, guided by an internal compass. He may not always stay on track but he always returns to the proper course. His internal compass produces a feeling that keeps him pointing to his true purpose. Such an insight comes with maturity and guidance from the wisdom of those he met through his transition.

Structured approach

To enjoy and maximize this new phase of your life requires planning and self-analysis, which most people have never contemplated in their daily grind to support family and career. "Developing a Retirement Success Plan" is provided as a company workshop or part of an individual career transition program. The two-step process involves a comprehensive self-analysis test developed by the DBM research group. Then, a DBM Consultant will help the clients explore their skills and preferences to make their lifestyle choices. Through coaching and direction, each client develops a personalized retirement success plan—a plan that will help him achieve a rewarding experience from the new directions selected. To create a plan, DBM has designed a structured approach, which has been tried in real life cases.

A calling is about focus. In a world filled with distractions, a calling pulls and makes a sound that only you can hear. It moves you away from other people's expectations as you find your own self. Your calling and purpose will come in its own time. It is DBM's job to learn as much as we can together. This learning process is how DBM will help you meet your personal vision. It comes with a soft but triumphant sound "This is my life."

(Ms Arcenas is a senior consultant with Drake Beam Morin Philippines. Her experience was honed as a human resource manager with Exxon Mobil. She took early retirement to explore her options and to find her calling in Career Counseling and Organization Development.)

All systems are go for young business analyst

By Ime Aznar
Contributor

ALL ABOUT WORK

TO UNDERTAKE any task effectively, there has to be a system. It must be an effective system that will make the task easier, and the process faster. More important, it must provide efficient solutions.

This simple analogy also applies to the field of systems development, except that everything is done on a much grander scale. The projects could involve millions of pesos, span several regions, or even continents, and affect the lives of thousands of individuals from all over the world.

Businesses run with the help of the different systems that make each aspect of the business more manageable. Almost all kinds of businesses, belonging to different industries, need systems so they can operate smoothly and efficiently.

The good business analyst

Jesusa N. Zuñiga, a senior business analyst (sometimes referred to as a business systems analyst) in information technology, is involved in the identification, analysis and development of systems development projects for a leading insurance company. As a Fellow of the Life Management Institute (FLMI), and an Affiliate of the Society of Actuaries (SA), she has more than nine years of extensive experience in the life insurance systems development and application support.

"I like my job very much because although it's really difficult, it's not boring," she explains. She finds challenge in understanding the different requirements of her clients, and finding a solution to the problems through data gathering and analysis.

"You have to understand how things work to be able to answer the needs of the people you work with," Zuñiga says. She also adds that good communication and analytical skills, mixed with capabilities in information gathering and organization are the right mix of competencies needed to get the job done.

Software development is also part of a business analyst's job. Zuñiga also conducts training, and on-site support during systems testing.

A highly rewarding career

Zuñiga has a BS Math degree (major in Actuarial Science) from the University of Santo Tomas. Aside from Mathematics, a student who is considering a career in software application development or business analysis could also take up Computer Science or Industrial Engineering. "Take the course that's nearest to the industry you want to get into," she advises, "for example, if you want to work as a business analyst in the field of finance or insurance, Actuarial Science would be a good field of study."

ZUÑIGA JOSEPH AGCAOILI

There is a high demand for the job because it is a requirement in many different industries, and in the different departments of various businesses. The banking and finance sectors are among the top employers.

Compensation is good, too, and according to Zuñiga, the pay is enough to live a comfortable life. Travel is also part of the job, so that's a good bonus for people who like seeing new places, experiencing different cultures, and meeting new people. Opportunities for advancement and promotion are also presented to competent business analysts.

Finding system in everything

Zuñiga reveals that when things at work get stressful, she finds relaxation in house cleaning. In fact, she has developed a system for it and considers it her physical workout, as well. She gets tired, of course, but her stress goes away once she's done with the cleaning.

Her life seems to work well because systems are in place, both at work and in the home. She spends time on her work, her family, her spiritual life, and personal interests. "I enjoy talking to my kids, we could go on for hours and I don't get tired of it," she says. She also loves taking long walks and trips around the village with her family, listening to music, singing, playing the guitar, and drawing/sketching. This balance is her own personal system, and like the projects that she has created at work, it seems to be doing its job well.

Career planning starts with self-assessment

By Teena Rose

ONE of the biggest mistakes that individuals make with their careers is to go aimlessly through school or work in an entry-level position with no clear direction (goals). They wait until the home-stretch—graduation, layoff or departure—before taking a stab at other opportunities. Finding a well-paying job or locating opportunities for advancement shouldn't be treated as an afterthought, rather one that has been planned and prepared for months or years.

Preparation, preparation, and more preparation! Imagine signing up for a marathon and waiting until the day prior to begin preparing for the race. Obviously, you're not ready because of lack of training, you didn't seek the assistance of a coach or mentor, and you didn't assess the resources you would need on the day of the race. Without proper preparation, what are your chances of completing the race?

Baby steps

Like any serious step you'll take in life, you must first determine the number of baby steps needed to get from one spot to the next. In other words, where are you headed and how will you get there? Outline every obstacle or challenge that will hinder your progress of taking these steps. Each small step (short-term goal) will take you closer to satisfying the big steps, known as long-term career goals.

First, take a good look at the types of positions you've held to date along with your college major. Ask yourself, do I like where I'm at and where do I see myself in five years? Don't be ashamed if you're not sure. Visit your favorite job bank, type in keywords for your intended career field, and examine those positions to determine if any meet your satisfaction.

Second, write down job and career goals (preferably six months before graduating or the start of your intended job search). Job goals pertain to the position you currently hold now, whereas, career goals are the "big picture" (e.g. career change in less than two years or targeting a six-figure salary). Research two or three positions that you would love to obtain today along with those you're striving for in a couple of years.

Preparation

Third, prepare yourself, your credentials, and your resumé based on your predetermined career opportunities and goals. Prepare to go back to college, join business groups, serve on committees, or alter your resumé to encompass all (or any) of these.

In a career journal, make notations of the positions that interest you along with the skills required for each. Add other entries pertaining to outstanding credentials and miscellaneous obstacles in the order that'll need to be completed, with resolutions and proposed dates of completion.

The object is to not stand still. Navigate your future by performing a self-assessment that will get you from a to z in your career. Jay Block says it best in his book, "The End of the Job Search, Mastering the Art of Career Design," "Defining your career aspirations is an essential step in the process of transforming abstract thoughts into tangible realities. Everything ever accomplished by man or woman first started as a thought." I challenge you to assess yourself and create a master plan ... it's your career!

(Rose is a certified and published resumé writer and author of "20-Minute Cover Letter Fixer" and "Cracking the Code to Pharmaceutical Sales," which are available at CareerEpublications.com.*)*

Ateneo CORD offers HR planning, staffing program

THE ATENEO Center for Organization Research and Development (CORD) will be conducting a certificate course in Human Resource Planning and Staffing on May 16-20. This program is designed to provide participants with the skills in human resources planning and forecasting, recruitment, and selection. Modules include: overview of strategic HRM, identifying competencies, recruitment and selection. At the end of the program, participants are expected to complete learning outcomes such as identification of competencies, interview simulation, and formulation of recruitment and selection plans. For more information and reservations, contact Ateneo CORD, 2nd floor Höffner Building, Social Development Complex, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Call telephone numbers (632) 426-5931, 426-6282, 426-6001 loc. 5363; fax (632) 426-6065; e-mail ateneocord@admu.edu.ph or visit www.ateneocord.org.

Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 24, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2004 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 25, 2004
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2004
5. Approval of the 2004 Annual Report
6. Ratification of All Acts and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2004 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
7. Election of Directors
8. Appointment of External Auditor
9. Other Matters
10. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2004 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 25, 2004 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 25, 2005 will be entitled to notice of and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19, 2005. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 20, 2005, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 4, 2005

(SGD.) RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
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Making The Filipino Proud

On its 20th Year, Splash Reaffirms its Commitment to its Corporate Cause.

"We shall uplift the pride and economic well-being of the Filipino." This is the commitment that Splash has pursued from the beginning of its corporate existence.

Now more than ever, having reached a stage where it is actually a bigger catalyst of change--- with the will and the capability to do more good for more people-- Splash acts on the belief that the great blessings it has reaped come with great responsibilities.

Other big, global corporations also pledge their resources to their own causes, but Splash's commitment remains steadfast, whatever the state of the Philippine economy. Because the corporation is bullish on what the Filipino can do, Splash is in for the long haul: in its own special way, it will always dedicate resources to help empower the Filipino.

As Splash continues to grow, it will create more jobs and business opportunities. It will contribute to the development of the communities where it operates, and to the country as a whole. For example, investing in the WAY THE FILIPINO YOUTH IS EDUCATED. The benefits for the long term, especially for the country will be astounding.

Through projects and programs it formally launches today, Splash eagerly anticipates the inevitable realization of its vision for the Filipino youth.

"Negosyante, Estudyante"will award 20 college scholarships to 20 deserving students, and "Batang Henyo", will likewise award the 20 inventions of young scientists.

Imagine planting the seed of entrepreneurship, love of science, creativity and innovation in the Filipino youth. How many budding entrepreneurs will Splash help discover then... how many scientists will it help nurture? In a developing country like the Philippines, the need for more scientists and entrepreneurs cannot be overemphasized. It is this new generation of Filipino youth who will accelerate the country's growth ---taking the Philippines out of the Third World-and into the First.

Aside from these youth oriented programs, Splash will support livelihood and research projects, specifically on indigenous nutraceutical products. Splash recognizes the potential of our Philippine plants, which may just give the Filipino a means of conquering the nutraceutical global market.

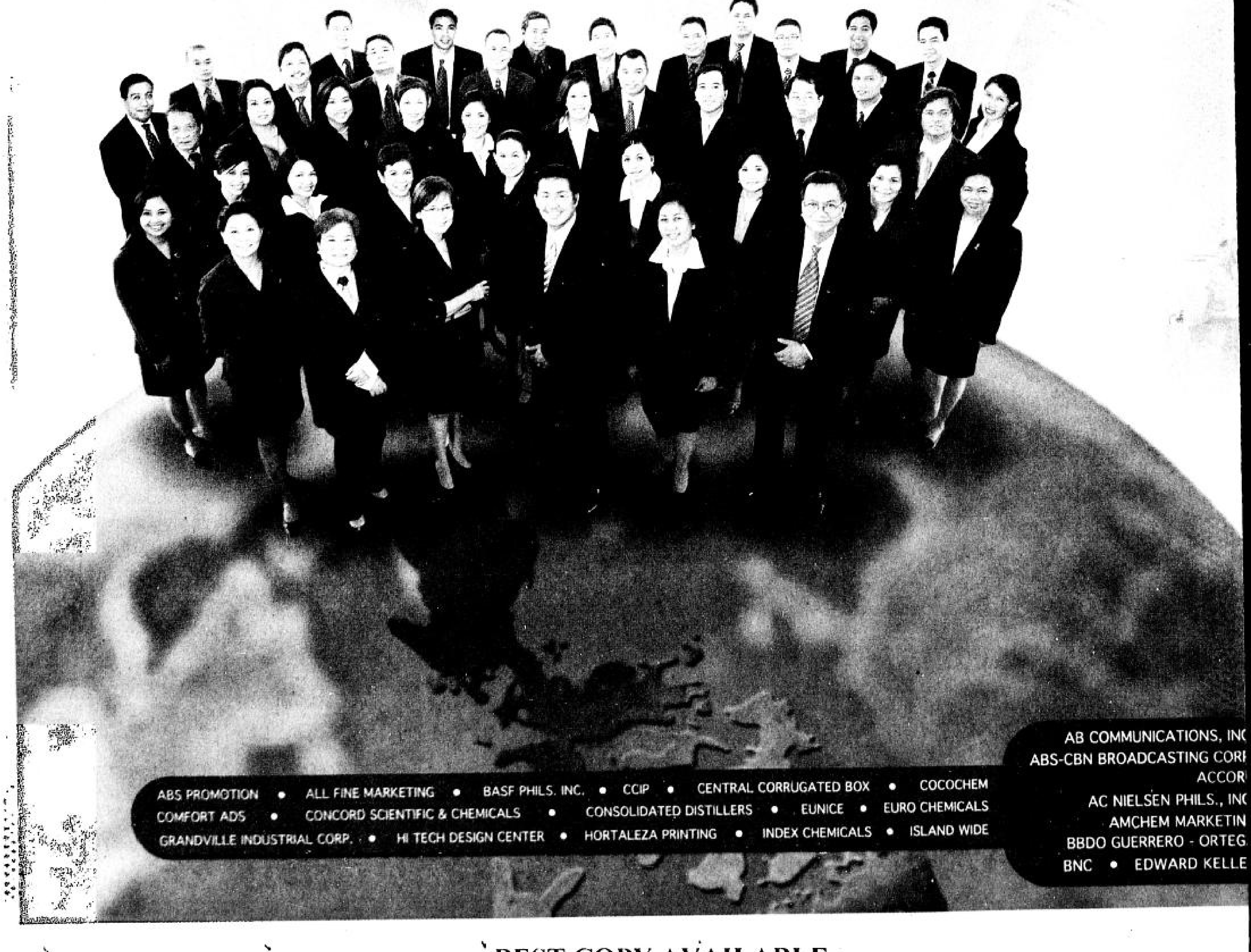
The upliftment of the Filipino. It continues to happen... because Splash will always recognize his potential, and will give him the impetus to succeed.

As Splash has done in the past -- it will continue to do so into the future. For its vision is of a Philippines peopled by Filipinos whose vision echoes that of Splash's "Bagong Pilipino, maka-Pilipino---Kayang tumapat sa Buong Mundo."

For it is rooted in how we began with a Splash...

FOR OTHERS, TWELVE THOUSAND PESOS WOULD HARDLY CAUSE A RIPPLE. BUT TO SOME, IT WAS ALL IT TOOK TO CREATE A SPLASH.

That was the
start up capital
that fueled
Drs. Rolando and



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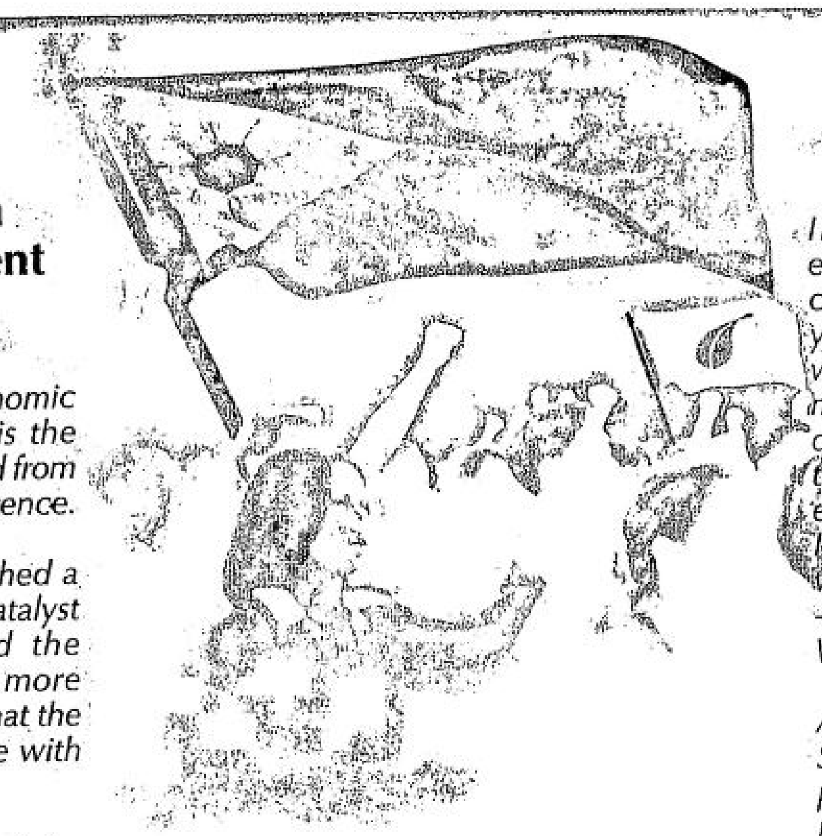

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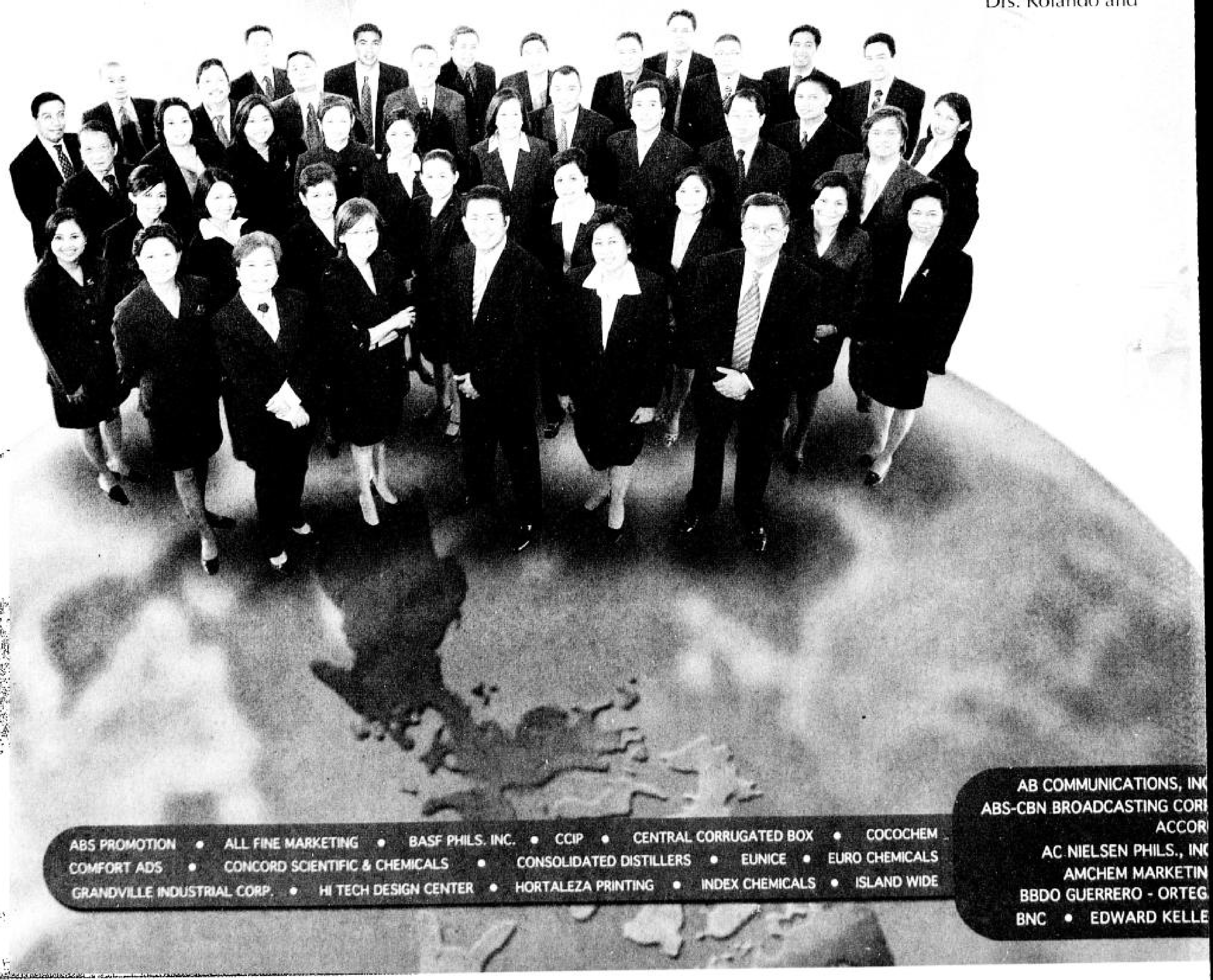

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SPLASH
CORPORATION
20
YEARS

Rosalinda Hortaleza's little backyard industry... that became an innovative company... that metamorphosed into a Filipino multinational corporation.

From producing acetone, cuticle removers and hairsprays, Splash has moved on, having created and launched products that reinvented the concept of beauty itself. Dominant players Maxi-Peel and Extraderm, Skinwhite and Biolink. Present and future megabrands --- all firmly niched in the hearts and minds of Filipinos.

DUBBED BY EUROMONITOR* AS THE PRIDE OF THE FILIPINO IN THE PERSONAL CARE INDUSTRY

Splash has leaped to the number 6 position in the country's multi-billion personal care industry. Standing abreast with big, foreign global corporations, Splash is the only Filipino corporation in this elite roster. And its success rides on product innovations that have transformed consumer products into market leaders, in their own categories:
* Extraderm and Maxi-Peel - together, corner 83% of the total exfoliant market which these two brands created.
* Skinwhite - the undisputed market leader in the whitening lotion category
* Biolink - a fast-rising challenger brand in the natural whitening category.

With the success of these brands, in the highly competitive Skin Care market, Splash has eased out the big, global corporations: Splash is now No. 1.

These products are flag carriers all --- proof of what the indomitable spirit of the Filipino can do.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF SPLASH: FOR THE PROGRESS AND PRIDE OF THE FILIPINO

The families of Splash's employees directly benefit from the corporation's growth and profitability. All Splash employees are eligible for housing benefits --- and acquiring their own is a major dream for all Filipinos. But alongside these employees are suppliers and partners who grow as the corporation propels forward. More than ever, the developments in Splash are about to create ripples of positive changes in the country and even around the world. For a Splash of even greater things to come are being brought into reality.

In the next three years, Splash will invest an additional P400 million in its foreign expansion program, exporting truly innovative Filipino products like Extraderm, Skinwhite, Biolink, and Maxi-Peel into the foreign market - to countries like Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. A thrust that helps bring in much needed dollars to pump up the country's economy.

To further increase productivity, Splash also invested P180 million in business process improvement involving automation using an enterprise resource planning system from software vendor SAP.

More so, Splash constructed its second manufacturing plant --- at a cost that amounted to P400 million. Another P40 million accelerated the rise of a state-of-the-art research facility. Both were built and designed by an all-Filipino team of Splash engineers, architects and designers. In 2003, the same manufacturing plant drew the admiration of foreign technicians and consultants attending a global cosmetics conference in the country. Hardly did they expect the plant to be the state-of-the-art and world class facility that it is, with a world-class capability of manufacturing products to ISO standards.

Imagine a Filipino at a far corner of the globe, entering a retail establishment, looking through the shelves and discovering her favorite Splash product. A product that is totally Filipino!

ROOTING FOR THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines remains the research and manufacturing hub of Splash. The opportunities it creates for Filipinos, by way of jobs and businesses is definitely on the upswing. With the P40 million investment poured into the construction of the state-of-the-art research facility of Splash, more opportunities were opened for the Filipino scientist. After all, Splash was responsible in spearheading research and science as the bedrock of product innovation.

Even worthier is the fact that Splash is one of the top tax-payers of the country. A corporate responsibility it assumes diligently --- as a way of helping the government supply people with much needed basic services.

MAKE A SPLASH AROUND THE WORLD

Splash has conquered Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Singapore. Its products make waves in Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Given the additional P400 million the corporation intends to invest in its foreign expansion program, Splash is poised to cover more of the globe, with products that have renewed the Filipino's pride -- "Gawang Pilipino na kayang tumapat sa buong mundo."

> ***"There is too much pride in our spirits, too much hope in our hearts, to be crushed by helplessness and despair. The present situation is a challenge for us to do better, to work even harder, to sacrifice and endure hardships; together we join our efforts to bring about a brighter tomorrow for our country and our people."***
> ***--- Drs. Rolando and Rosalinda Hortaleza***

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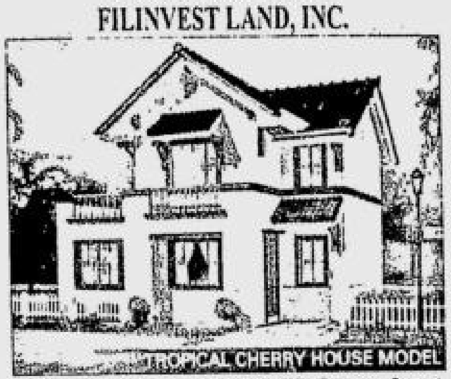

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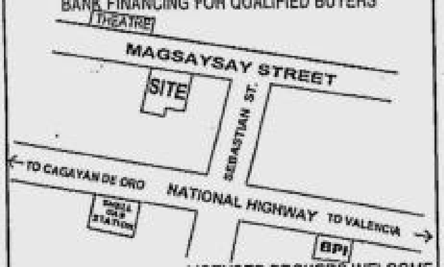

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HOUSE & LOT

MANILA

SAN ANDRES MANILA Bnew Twnhse/3stry/3br/4tb/1-2grge P3.860M up 8903461 loc 34

MANDALUYONG

98sq.m 2Stry Hse Manda. Near SM-Megamall 531-9954

MARIKINA

Bnew com/res 3br 2.8M 9487112

PARANAQUE

300sqm P5M BF Homes Pque 825-9593 Rowena Perote

BNew LA106m² FA155m² ExTerm 3br 2tb 2CGrg Nawasa 2.95M 0917-6267797, 824-9073 DBO

QUEZON CITY

Filinvest2 Cor. 112m² 3br SFurn 0915-4057078 Jun

Hse 4 Sale 2stry 4BR 4TB 2car grge Tel 8114071 8236047

KAMUNING bnew 3units 3sty thse #60 K2nd PROJ.4 bnew nr LRT stn Hi-Top #5-C Aguinaldo 7242629 / 4352106 / 4127311

VILLA ESPANA Araneta Av LA108m² FA195m² 2stry 4BR 4TB 1car grge P2.3M 4539180/81 Rene or Malou

•TALAYAN 5.7M P3-6.5M 0917-5271188

SAN JUAN

MANDALUYONG NR SHAW BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/3-4tb/mdsrm/1-2grge P3 656M up 8903461

HOUSE & LOT

CAVITE

212 SQM NEAR SM BACOOR TEL. #8704370 - MARINA

LAGUNA

Sta Rosa Laguna 0917-8312369

CONDO/TWNHSE

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BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/2 1/2tb/grge P3.720M up 8903461 loc 34

Oriental Gardens Makati 45.5m² 2.7&up Roselyn 0920-3843962

MANILA

BAY GARDEN ROXAS BLVD 1,2,3BR 0920-9602940 RFO

MANDALUYONG

CONDO, BNEW, 09192189817

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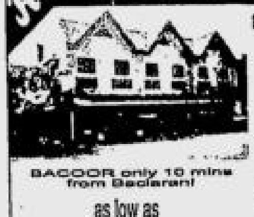

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SAN JUAN

Nr M. Paterno New: LA-130 FA-360, 4BR 4TB 3CG P8M 711-9051

OTHER AREAS

BNEW TWNHSE 7Km from Baguio, Pvt Subd., 24Hr Scty, FA90m² P1.2M 0917-8924959

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BF nr. Elizalde 334m² 8,500T/m² 0917-6267797, 824-9073 DBO

SAN JUAN

Araullo St. 531m² 721-3127

LAGUNA

192&271m². Financing Avail. Southpeak, San Pedro 09206540954

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FACTORY/WHSE

700/450/250m² 4172462 Lgro

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BRAND NEW SWIMMING POOL
PENTHOUSE LARGE VIEWING
DECK 4 CORNERS VIEW 4BRS
280SQMS 09277048463

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

QUEZON CITY

Scout 2-Sty House 3723326

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

BUS/RES 4BR/2TB P24T 8133827/28

MANILA

P4T 9178863211/2547788

PASIG

Ortigas FF New Condo Hi-end Amen. 0920-9617883

QUEZON CITY

Condo 3BR unit P25T
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SAN JUAN

2BR 2TB Nr Xavier 09173825198

Sn Juan P15T/mo. 715-3544

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QUEZON CITY

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20m² 6T 9178863211/4172462

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MAKATI

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CARS

MERCEDES

Red 87MB 1st owner P400T 8133827/28

NISSAN

Rush Sale!! 2001 Frontier 4x2 Manual P500T Neg. 0919-6707359 09193552515

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ELF '97 09194645649

OTHER CAR BRANDS

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SPECIAL CARS

CHEVY CASSIA '01 MATIC 09194645649

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CARS FOR RENT

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TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

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2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/out taking car 6567685

2% w/out taking car 5315577

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

OTHER EQUIPMENT

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PETS

BEAGLE PUPS 09106761055

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- Must possess excellent written and oral communication skills
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- Basic Salary P20,000 plus allowance and bonus

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- Female, graduate of a 4-year business course & computer literate
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Qualified applicants may apply in business attire with their comprehensive resumés, 2x2 pics, at #81 Dr. A. Santos Ave. cor. Seacom St., Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Look for Glenda Castro
May 12-13, 2005

Tel. No. 820-9270/71
(1:30-4:30 P.M. only)

WANTED

ASSISTANT SALES MANAGER
for the Tourism Industry
- Female, at least 35 years old
- Must have at least 5 years exp. in managing Account Executives
- Proficient in oral & written English

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
- Female, with pleasing personality
- Must have excellent public relations skills
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Compensation commensurate to qualifications.

Come personally to submit your complete resumé, transcript of records, and 2x2 photo, Mondays or Fridays 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.; Saturdays 8:00 - 12nn to:

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Penthouse, Oppen Bldg.,
349 G. Puyat St., Makati City

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Division of Pasig City and San Juan
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PILOT SCHOOL OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES
Maybunga, Pasig City

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the spouses Ricardo Morales and Erlinda Mateo consisting of a parcel of land, (TCT No. RT-5414-Bulacan) was extrajudicially settled by their heirs as per Doc. No. 462, Page No. 94, Book No. 121, Series of 2003 of the Notarial Register of Antonio R. Romulo of Bulacan (PDI-April 27, May 4, 11, 2005)

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All applicants must: have excellent English written and oral communication skills, willing to work long hours, a self starter, a team player, able to work under pressure, possess strong organizational and interpersonal skills. Strong MS office and internet usage skills is a must

MANAGEMENT DIVISION: ITO

HR Officer - Businesss, Psych. or Com. Graduate with at least 2 years non-traditional HR experience in a FAST HIRE, SKILL BASED environment. Must have proven track record in screening and hiring competent personnel.

Marketing Officers - Marketing course graduate with at least 1 year proven experience, expert English written skills, practical approach in marketing strategies.

Franchise Sales Executives - Business course graduate, excellent English verbal skills with above average comprehension of financial statements.

Franchise Operations Officers - Business course graduate with strong understanding of financial statements, proven past record in account management and project management.

Franchise Account Executives - College graduate, strong English verbal skills, highly organized and practical minded.

IT Technical Documentation Manager - Preferably a Microsoft Certified Professional, expert in Advanced Server 2003, Exchange Server, SQL Database, skilled in systems documentation, IT process standardization, personnel function management, and security management

IT/Technical Support Staff - CIS Graduate with basic to strong working knowledge of Advance Server, SQL Database, and security systems.

Software Development Officers - .NET or ASP Programmers, preferably with Microsoft Certification, minimum 1 year proven track record in clean cut source code development.

Finance Officer- preferably CPA, highly skilled in Quickbooks or Peachtree software, able to manage multiple accounts, proven track record in SME operations.

Accounting Officer - Preferably CPA with basic skills in Quickbooks or Peachtree software.

EDUCATION DIVISION: MTC

Medical Lecturers - Medical Doctors, innovative and creative in teaching style, can work on a part time or full time basis.

Medical Transcription Mentors - at least 1 year MT work experience; full time basis.

School Administrator or Faculty Coordinator - Previous experience in school administration is a plus, strong financial and management skills required.

SERVICES DIVISION: AMS/IQ

Medical Transcriptionists - Preferably allied med grad. or MT course grad, at least 6 months MT experience, min. 350 lines per day at 98% quality.

QA Officers / Team Leaders - Preferably allied med grad. or MT course grad, at least 1 year MT experience, 99% quality, strong editing and proofreading skills.

MT Operations Head - Medical Transcription or similar industry-related experience of at least 2 years. Highly proficient in written and oral English skills, excellent organizational skills, highly results oriented, with at least 2 years of proven performance in team management.

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Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Malaybalay City

Provincial Government of Bukidnon

759-05-002
Drugs & Medicines
760-05-002
Medical, Lab. Supplies & Reagents
PGSO Capitol Compd., Malaybalay City

Standard Form Number SF-GOOD-05
Revised on July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF BUKIDNON, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers distributors contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder projects:

NAME OF THE PROJECT	I. Drugs and Medicines II. Medical Laboratory Supplies & Reagents
LOCATION	Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City
BRIEF DESCRIPTION	For six months consumption of seven (7) Provincial Hospitals and Twenty-two (22) Provincial Health Stations
Approved Budget for the Contract	Project I – P23,037,865.88 Project II – P11,313,494.95
DELIVERY PERIOD	15 working days upon receipt of purchase order.
PLACE OF DELIVERY	Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years. The Eligibility Check Screening as well as Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
Issuance of Bid Documents	May 11-19, 2005
2. Application for Eligibility	May 19, 2005 not later than 9:00 A.M.
3. Pre-bid Conference	May 24, 2005
4. Opening of Bids	June 7, 2005 not later than 9:00 A.M.
5. Bid Evaluation	June 14, 2005
6. Post-qualification	June 21, 2005
7. Notice of Award	June 28, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,000.00/Project to the Provincial Treasurer.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the BAC office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security equal to 1% for Cash, Certified check, Cashier's check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable letter of credit, 1.5% for Bank guarantee; 2.5% for Surety bond of the Approved Budget for the Contract as advertised. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

The Province of Bukidnon reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Tel No. 088-221-2357 • Fax No. 088-813-2522

Approved by:

(Sgd.) JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES
Prov'l Admin/BAC Chairman

(PDI-May 11 & 25, 2005)

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

P.O. Box 789, Manila, Philippines
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. 632 4231, 632 4444; Fax No. 636 2577
Email: dmunoz@adb.org or cpsoriano@adb.org

INVITATION for BID

(Contract No. ADB/OAS-2005/012)
Provision, Configuration and Installation of Audiovisual System for OER's Briefing Theater

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines, wishes to receive bids from bidders for the provision, configuration and installation of audiovisual system for Office of External Relations Briefing Theater at ADB Headquarters, No. 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Philippines .
2. The Contractor shall provide ADB as part of their bids detailed systems block diagrams as well as a detailed list of the required equipment and their accessories for the most reliable and efficient integrated audio visual system. The bid shall include a multimedia projector system, sound system, Crestron remote control system and installation and commissioning. The complete details of equipment will be provided to interested bidders.
3. The Contract may only be awarded to companies who meet the following criteria:
   - i. Legal existence as a validly registered company for a minimum of 3 years; joint ventures are eligible provided each partner to the partnership have a legal existence as a validly registered company for a minimum of 3 years;
   - ii. Must have extensive experience in the field of audiovisual systems and/or related field and have done similar projects for the last 3 years;
   - iii. Must have a generally sound financial and credit position;
   - iv. Is not under a declaration or record of ineligibility for corrupt and/or fraudulent practices issued or kept by ADB.
4. Bid documents may be obtained from the Procurement and Contracts Administration Section, Institutional Services Division, Office of Administrative Services, Room 1630 South, ADB Building, No. 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, from 11- 16 May 2005 on any working day between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm. For inquiries, please call Mr. D. Munoz at 632 4231; fax no. 636 2567; email: dmunoz@adb.org or cpsoriano@adb.org.
5. A pre-bid meeting will be held at 2:00 pm on 16 May 2005 at Conference Room 1614 South of the Asian Development Bank Building, at the above given address, to brief bidders on the scope of goods/services and answer inquiries on ADB's requirements.
6. Two copies (marked "ORIGINAL and "COPY") of the technical and financial bids should be submitted each in a sealed envelope marked "Provision, Configuration and Installation of Audiovisual System for OER's Briefing Theater" addressed to the attention of OIC, Procurement and Contracts Administration Section, Institutional Services Division, Office of Administrative Services not later than 10:00 a.m. on 23 May 2005. The bids should be sent by courier mail or hand-carried and deposited in the bid box provided by ADB, located adjacent to the Reception Desk at the main entrance of the ADB Headquarters Building.
7. This invitation does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation of bid shall be borne solely by the bidder. ADB reserves the right to accept or reject any bid.

CÉCILE L.H.F. GREGORY
Chairperson
Institutional Procurement Committee
Office of Administrative Services

(PDI--May 11, & 12, 2005)

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Interested part-timers/students are also welcome to apply.

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25/f Cyber One Building, Eastwood Ave.
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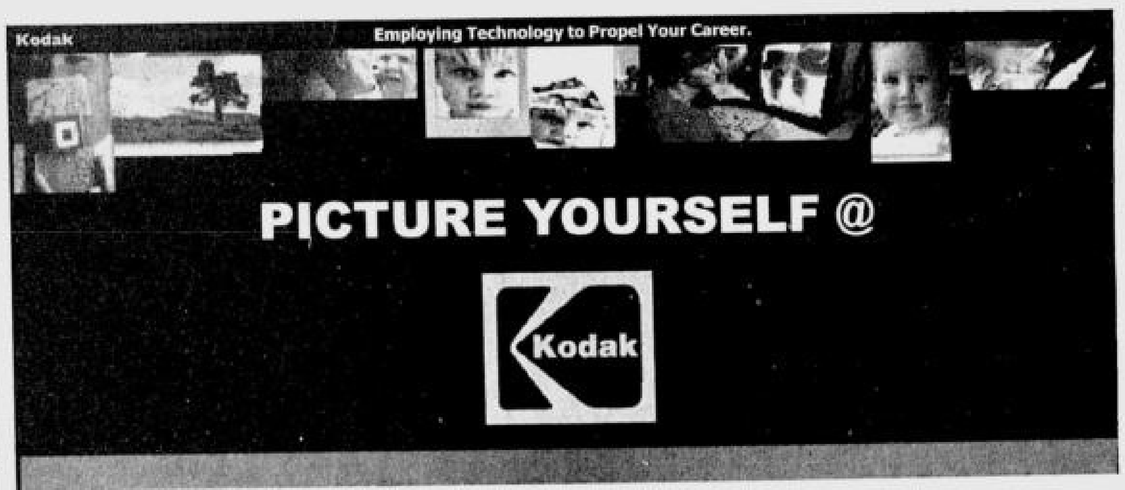

Imagine a career in Kodak.
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Kodak, the World's Leader in Imaging, is looking for dynamic individuals to join their equally dynamic business

For more than 120 years, KODAK has defined the world of imaging.
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Now is the exciting time to join us!

Account Managers

We need account managers to be assigned in Visayas (Cebu)

- A graduate of a Business, Industrial Management, Management Engineering or Marketing course
- Has 2-3 years experience in sales, preferably in consumer or IT industry
- Preferably has adequate understanding of the imaging business, products and services and the customers' business
- Creative and dynamic, and with initiative and good independent judgment
- Fluent in both oral and written communications
- With excellent interpersonal skills and can immediately establish rapport with a broad range of people
- Willing to travel or based anywhere in the Philippines

Accounting Assistant

- Has a college degree in Accounting; Professional certification (CPA) is an advantage
- Has at least one year experience in an accounting function
- Well versed in accounting principles and practices
- Proficient in manual and automated accounting systems, computer operations and applications
- Analytical and has the ability to work with details
- With high degree of integrity and interpersonal skills
- Has good organizational and communication skills
- A team player
- Willing and able to work long hours

Cashier

- Has a business degree, preferably in Accounting
- Has at least one year experience in the same function
- Proficient in computer applications (Microsoft office)
- Analytical and has the ability to work with details
- With high degree of integrity and interpersonal skills
- Has good organizational and communication skills
- A team player

Send your comprehensive resumé, transcript of records and 2x2 Kodak picture to:

KODAK PHILIPPINES, LTD.
Human Resources Department
2247 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City .

Deadline of submission of applications will be on May 12, 2005.

POEA

24-HR HOTLINES • 722-1144 • 722-1155

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Commitee – Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP/G-EPS registered suppliers to a bidding for the following:

Item 1 – 2,950 ctrgs. – Ribbon Cartridge for Epson FX-2190, 9 pin Dot Matrix Printer P/N SO15327, Original

Item 2 – 5,140 ctrgs. – Ribbon Cartridge for Lexmark 2400 series Dot Matrix Printer P/N Reorder No. 11A3540, Original

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC): **Item 1 – P1,622,500.00**
Item 2 – P3,222,780.00

Delivery Period: Within sixty (60) calendar days after receipt of Purchase Order

Bid documents are available from **5 May 2005 to 19 May 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of equivalent to .05% of the Total Approved Budget for the Contract per item at the following:

BAC Secretariat
Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building
cor. A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Sts., Malate, Manila
Tel. No(s). 525-2493

Bidding Date and Time: **1 June 2005** not later than **10:00 A.M.**
Place: Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Bldg., BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes together with the sample/s of the offer:

Envelope No. 1:
1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers.
2. Y2004 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet).
3. Y2004 Income Tax Return; copy each of the Filing Reference and Payment Confirmation and Tax Clearance Certificate issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).
4. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License.
5. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid; or a certification from the bank stating that the bidder has a cash deposit with a holding period of at least one (1) month from the date of bidding. The commitment or cash deposit certificate shall be in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current Assets – Current Liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects: K=10.
6. Sworn statement that the prospective bidder is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation.
7. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check.
8. Sworn certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original.
9. Affidavit of the prospective bidder that he or she or any officer of the corporation is not related to the Head of the Procuring Entity by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.
10. Current and valid certificate of authorized distributorship of Epson/Lexmark consumable from the manufacturer.

Envelope No. 2:
1. Instructions to Bidders
2. Duly accomplished Certification/Undertaking
3. Original Bid Security

Envelope No. 3:
Price Proposal.

All envelopes shall be dropped in the bid box located at Room MR2A, 5-Storey Bldg., BSP Main Complex. **LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

The BSP assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–May 11, 2005)

PNOC
The Energy Company

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines MCPO Box 2102 Tel. No. 893-6001/1320

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Medium A - Electrical Works or Building & Industrial Plant to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE NEGROS OCC. EXPANDED RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJ. STAGE IV, SCHED 1
EDC 05-062

The Approved Budget is P 3,675,023.35 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 120 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o M.S. Magdamit) starting **May 11, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Two Hundred (P200.00).

Application for Eligibility and a Letter of Intent must be submitted to the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group **not later than 3:00 p.m. of June 2, 2005.**

Bid documents will be available for issuance to eligible bidders starting June 14, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on June 30, 2005, 10:00 a.m. at the Pre-bid room, 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st floor Bldg., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of July 28, 2005** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC - EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI – May 11, 2005)

Send your resumé instantly. JOB Market www.jobmarket.elonline.com

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OBITUARIES

"I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in Me, will live,
even though he dies; and whoever
believes in Me will never die."

In Loving Memory

on the 3rd **DEATH ANNIVERSARY**
of our **DEARLY BELOVED DADDY**

DANNY N. SILVA

September 5, 1948 – May 11, 2002

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered
at the following churches:

Parish of the Resurrection, BF Homes, Parañaque	5:30 a.m.; 6:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Chapel of St. Benedict, Alabang	7:30 a.m.
Sta. Clara Parish, Pasay City	7:00 p.m.
Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Pasay City	6:00 a.m.
San Isidro Parish, Pasay City	6:00 p.m.
St. John Bosco Parish, Makati	6:30 a.m.
San Ildefonso Parish, Makati	6:00 a.m.
Holy Family Parish, Makati	6:00 a.m.
Manila Cathedral, Intramuros, Manila	7:30 a.m.
San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila	7:00 a.m.
Parish of the Holy Cross, Makati City	6:00 a.m.
Sto. Niño Parish, Pandacan	7:00 a.m.
Parish of Our Lady of the Abandones, Sta. Ana, Mla.	6:30 a.m.
St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Paco, Manila	6:30 a.m.
St. Anthony Shrine, Sampaloc, Manila	6:15 a.m.
Assumption Parish, Malate	6:00 a.m.
San Fernando de Dilao Parish, Paco, Manila	5:45 a.m.

His loving wife **Juliet**; children **Joy, Dex & Dionne**; grandchildren **Gleo & Joaquin** and **Nanay Leony**; brothers and sisters, relatives and friends wish to thank all those who keep him in their prayer and memory.

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Office of the Secretariat for the Bids & Awards Committees in the Central Office
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 loc. 1829-1830 www.philhealth.gov.ph
Facsimile No. 637-4735 e-mail add: snbac@philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS REMITTANCE FORMS
(ME-5) FOR THE EMPLOYED SECTOR
No. 2005 – 007 g

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) wishes to invite duly licensed companies or business firms to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Procurement of Contribution Remittance Forms for the Employed Sector (ME-5) with the following specifications:

ME-5 Remittance Forms for the Employed Sector

QUANTITY	71,600 pads (14,320,000 sheets, 50 sets per pad @ 4 copies per set)
SIZE	Width 7.75 Inches x Length 5 inches
MATERIAL	Imported Colored Carbon-less Paper Impression must be clear up to the last ply White Carbon-less Paper Yellow Carbon-less Paper Green Carbon-less Paper Pink Carbon-less Paper Wrapping Paper Cover / Chip Board
PROCESS	Offset printing / Red Gum Padded Back to back printing on all copies
SERIAL NUMBERS	9 Digits – All Numeric (Crash Numbering) 71,600 pads (209657501 – 213237500)
PACKAGING	50 pads per corrugated box Serial Numbers must be posted on two (2) opposite sides of the box.

The approved budget for the contract for the Procurement of Contribution Remittance Forms for the Employed Sector (ME-5) is **PhP5,730,000.00** coming from **C.O.B. 2005.**

Bid documents can be obtained from **May 16 – 26, 2005**, 8:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. at the Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office, (Room 1804) 18th floor, PHILHEALTH, Citystate Centre, # 709 Shaw Blvd., Oranbo, Pasig City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **PhP4,000.00.**

A pre-bid conference will be held on **May 30, 2005 at 1:30p.m.** at the Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office.

Deadline of submission of bids will be on **June 13, 2005 at 12:00 noon** at the office of the BAC Secretariat (Room 1804). Opening of Bids will follow at **1:30 p.m.** at the same date and venue. The official time clock shall be the wall clock located at Room 1804 (Office of the BAC Secretariat). **Any bid submitted after the cut-off time will not be accepted.**

(Sgd.) **OCTAVINO Q. ESGUERRA**
Senior Vice President and Chief Actuary
BAC Chairperson for Goods and Services

(PDI--May 11 & 18, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION
FOR APPROVAL OF THE SALE OF
ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION ASSETS

ERC CASE NO. 2005-176MC

ANGELES ELECTRIC CORPORATION,
INC. (AEC),
Applicant.
x-------------------------------------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing on April 6, 2005 by applicant Angeles Electric Corporation (AEC) of an application for approval of its sale of electric distribution assets.

The Commission has set the said application for hearing on June 2, 2005 at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 PM) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorables **JESUS N. ALCORDO**, **RAUF A. TAN** and **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 27th day of April, 2005 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA**
Executive Director III

(PDI–May 11, 2005)

JUANITO A. BONOAN SR.

of Pasig City

Former Customs Operations Chief and Navy Officer
Died May 8, 2005 at the age of 77.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz G. Araneta, Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 14, 2005 at the Pasig Municipal Cemetery after the 1PM Mass at the Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral in Pasig City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
and bank-to-bank payments

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development – Ilocos
MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER
"PHIC Accredited Health Care Provider"
Batac, Ilocos Norte
Trunk line 077-792-3144; Fax line 077-792-3133
E-mail address: mmmh_doh@yahoo.com

INVITATION TO ELIGIBILITY SCREENING & TO BID

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center, Batac, Ilocos Norte, thru the Bids & Awards Committee is inviting bids to all interested suppliers, manufacturers and/or exclusive distributors to bid for the supply and delivery of the following:

Hospital Medical Equipment
Drugs & Medicines Requirements
Medical/Surgical Supplies, Laboratory & Dental Supplies

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Advertisement	May 11-24, 2005
2. Issuance of Bid Documents/ Eligibility Checklist	June 15-24, 2005
3. Pre-bid conference	June 28, 2005 10:00 AM sharp MMMH & MC Training Center
4. Eligibility check/Submission & Opening of sealed bids for: – Drugs & Medicines	July 11, 2005, 9:30 AM sharp (same venue)
– Medical/Surgical Supplies; Laboratory, X'ray and Dental Supplies	July 12, 2005 9:30 AM sharp
– Medical Equipment	July 13, 2005, 9:30 AM sharp

The complete set of bid documents may be purchased by the interested eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **ONE THOUSAND PESOS** (Php1,000.00) only. Bid documents may be secured at the Property & Supply Section.

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without offering any reason or waive any formality therein and to award the contract to the bidder whose proposals as evaluated by the Bids & Awards Committee, is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **MONA LIZA PASTRANA, M.D.**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–May 11 & 18, 2005)

PNOC
The Energy Company

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines MCPO Box 2102 Tel. No. 893-6001/1320

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Medium A - Electrical Works or Building & Industrial Plant to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE NEGROS OCC. EXPANDED RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJ. STAGE IV, SCHED 2 (6 SITIOS)
EDC 05-064

The Approved Budget is P 3,962,611.05 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 120 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o M.S. Magdamit) starting **May 11, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Two Hundred (P200.00).

Application for Eligibility and a Letter of Intent must be submitted to the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group **not later than 3:00 p.m. of May 31, 2005.**

Bid documents will be available for issuance to eligible bidders starting June 14, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on June 30, 2005, 10:00 a.m. at the Pre-bid room 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

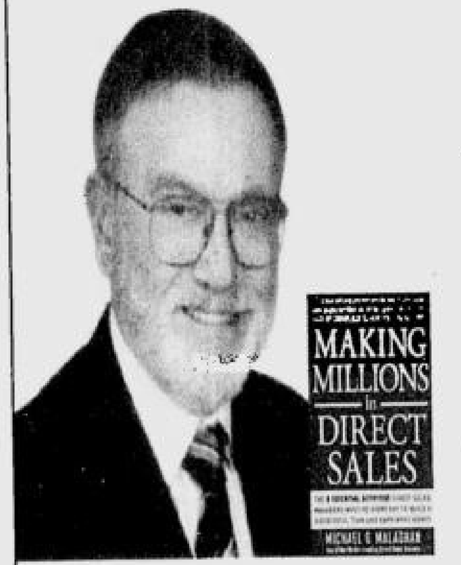
Sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st floor Bldg., Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of July 21, 2005** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC - EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI – May 11, 2005)

TRAINING WORKS
eccp
EUROPEAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE PHILIPPINES


MAKING MILLIONS in DIRECT SALES
MICHAEL G. MALAGHAN

MAKE MORE MILLIONS IN SALES!

A two day seminar program
with the
"Direct Selling Guru"

Mike Malaghan

May 17-18, 2005
(Tuesday & Wednesday) 8:30a.m.–5:30p.m.
Manila B Room, Shangri-La Hotel Makati
Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City

Grab all the market all the time!

- Would you like your sales managers to reach beyond their prospecting comfort zone?
- Would you like your sales managers trained in 20 proven lead generating methods?
- Do you want your sales managers to be able to teach a time management system that increases their sales force's prospecting activity by 30%?
- Do you want your sales managers to recruit more often and be better at it?

If you said, *Yes!* to any of these questions, this program is for you. Mike Malaghan has four decades' experience developing sales managers in direct-to the-consumer, face-to-face selling. He can help your managers target better prospects, build their team and grab all the market all the time!

Mike Malaghan has produced more than one billion dollars in face-to-face sales using his proven lead-generating methods. He can help your sales managers reach beyond their prospecting comfort zone and increase their prospecting activity.

Who Should Attend

Sales managers, their assistants and those engaged in SALES who wish to increase knowledge or strategies in making MORE MILLIONS.

How You Will Benefit

- Sales managers will reach beyond their prospecting comfort zone.
- Will be trained in 20 proven lead generating methods.
- Sales manager will be able to teach a time management system that increases their sales force's prospecting activity by 30%
- Participants to recruit more often and be better at it.
- Sales managers will leave this seminar with lots of things to do and a definite time frame to get it done.

For inquiries, please call Jean at 845-1324; 759-6680 or e-mail: jtuason@eccp.com

Reply Form (cut & fax to 845-1395; 759-6690)

Yes! I will join the seminar on
Make More Millions in Sales
May 17-18, 2005, 8:30a.m.-5:30p.m. Manila B Room, Shangri-La Hotel Makati

Name ______________________
Company ______________________
Address ______________________
Tel ______________________
Fax ______________________
E-mail ______________________
Signature ______________________

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☎ 912-9008-11 Fax 912-9011
SM MEGAMALL, MANDALUYONG CITY
☎ 6350219 ☎ 6872354 ☎ 6872366 Fax 6350220
G/F TRINITY BLDG., 636 T.M. KALAW ST., ERMITA, MANILA
☎ 5273342 ☎ 522-4406 ☎ 5276357 Fax 5280213
ALABANG, MUNTINLUPA CITY
☎ 8424503 ☎ 8506465 Fax 8506465
e-mail address: main_classifieds@inquirer.com.ph

OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Funeral Home and Crematory
845-2334 to 38; 845-2440

TOGETHER WITH THE FAMILY
OF OUR BELOVED

LAU CHO CHI

THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF
CELINE MARKETING CORP.

Announce her joining our Creator
*on **May 7, 2005** at the age of 100.*

Her children **CHING SAN** and **SAU FA**, **CHING ZHONG** and **SIU KENG**, **PO NARN** and **WING FAI** (†), **BEN** and **VICKY**.

Her grandchildren; great grandchildren, great great grandson; relatives and friends request your prayers for the family.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 1of the Mortuary and Crematory of The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, until May 12.

Interment will be tomorrow, May 12, 2005, after the 8:00 a.m. Necrological Service. Burial will follow at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque.

Our caring, loving and selfless

LAU CHO CHI

Peacefully joined our Lord
and her husband CHUA KAI (†) on
May 7, 2005 at the age of 100.

Her children

CHING SHAN and SAU FA,
CHING ZHONG and SIU KENG,
PO NARN, and WING FAI (†)
BEN and VICKY

Her grandchildren; great grandchildren; great great grandson; relatives and friends, request your prayers for the family.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 1 of the Mortuary and Crematory of The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio Taguig, until May 12.

Interment will be tomorrow, May 12, 2005 after the 8:00 A.M. Necrological Service. Burial will follow at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque.

Our dearly beloved, DITCHE

SOFIA R. ALMEDA

(Biñan, Laguna)

Sept. 18, 1908 – May 9, 2005

Her loving nieces and nephews: **VICTORIA** & **Ebenezer** (†) **Cachola**, **AVELINA A. Yu**, **Dr. SEVERINO** & **Remedios Yu**, **LORENZO A. Yu** and **RAMON** & **Cipriana** (†) **Yu**, grandnephews, grandnieces & great grandchildren request relatives, friends, pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at 1010 Sta. Catalina St., San Antonio, Biñan, Laguna.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 12, 2005, at Roman Catholic Cemetery after 2:00 p.m. Mass at San Isidro Labrador Parish Church, Poblacion, Biñan, Laguna.

Message of Thanks

We, the bereaved family of the late

GENEROSA MILLARES BUBAN

Born: December 03, 1933 Died: May 02, 2005

Wish to express our sincerest gratitude and thanks for the Mass and prayers you have offered, the Mass cards and flowers you sent, for the words of comfort and encourangement in our time of grief, for keeping vigil during the wake, and for being with us when we finally laid her to rest.

We appreciate very much the things you have done during our moment of sorrows. We will cherish all these for the rest of our lives.

Atty. Felix S. Falgui, Sr.

UP Law '34

Balaoan, La Union and White Plains, Quezon City

Peacefully joined our Lord
on May 9, 2005 at the age of 94.

Together with our mother, Rosalina del Rosario, we his children, Eos Regalado Capistrano, Omar & Lani, Edmundo (†) & Marica, Felix Jr. and Angel, Jazmin & Eduardo San Gabriel, Oscar & Tessa, all his 23 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren, request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the White Plains Chapel. Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina on Friday, May 13, 2005 immediately after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the White Plains Chapel.

Our Dearly Beloved

Col. Valentin De Sagun Mayuga

PC, GSC (Ret.)

*Peacefully joined our Lord and his wife, **Remedios** on May 6, 2005 at the age of 84.*

His loving children **Randy**, **Nelson**, **Ronnie**, and **Dina**, daughters and son-in-law, grandchildren and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. His remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City on Friday, May 13, 2005 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

Dr. Jose C. Araneta

Was called home to the Lord on Sunday, May 8, 2005

Respected Professor of the University of the Philippines,
College of Engineering.
A man of innumerable interests and endless dreams.
A loving husband and devout father.

*His wife, **Marilene**, children **Maureen Anne** and **James Michael**, mother-in-law **Milagros**, his relatives and friends, all humbly request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.*

The funeral mass and necrological rites were held at the Parish of the Holy Sacrifice, University of the Philippines in Diliman last May 10, 2005. Cremation will take place at 1:00 in the afternoon at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina on May 11, 2005.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord." – 2 Corinthians 5:8

BUSINESS

WEAK ELECTRONICS DEMAND

Exports hit $3.26B in March, down 2.8%

By Michelle V. Remo

WANING demand for electronics products has led to a 2.8-percent drop in exports in March from a year earlier to $3.256 billion.

The report from the National Statistics Office showed that exports of electronics, which account for 66.4 percent of total exports, slipped 3.7 percent in March to $2.162 billion.

This was the second straight month that total exports dropped, after 15 consecutive months of growth that ended in February, when exports dropped slightly by 0.6 percent from the previous year.

Total exports for the first three months, however, were higher this year at $9.52 billion, up 3.6 percent from $9.193 billion during the same period last year.

The government is looking at an 8 percent increase in exports this year, after growth of 7.5 percent to $40.3 billion dollars in 2004.

Aside from electronics, articles of apparel and clothing accessories, the country's second biggest dollar earner, likewise declined in March.

Export of garments only reached $149.23 million, or 16.6 percent lower than the same period last year.

Other products that registered export declines include: ignition wiring set used in vehicles, aircraft and ships, $54.09 million from $54.96 million; other products manufactured from material imported on a consignment basis, $42.21 million from $61.43 million; woodcraft and furniture, $42.19 million from $34.1 million.

Japan remained the country's top export destination, accounting for $663.45 million of the Philippines total exports for the month.

The United States followed, with $526.98 million; China, $301.91 million; Hong Kong, $269.05 million; Netherlands, $268.42 million; Singapore, $202.73 million; Malaysia, $188.04 million; Taiwan, $162.48 million; Korea, $116.1, and Indonesia, $98.4 million.

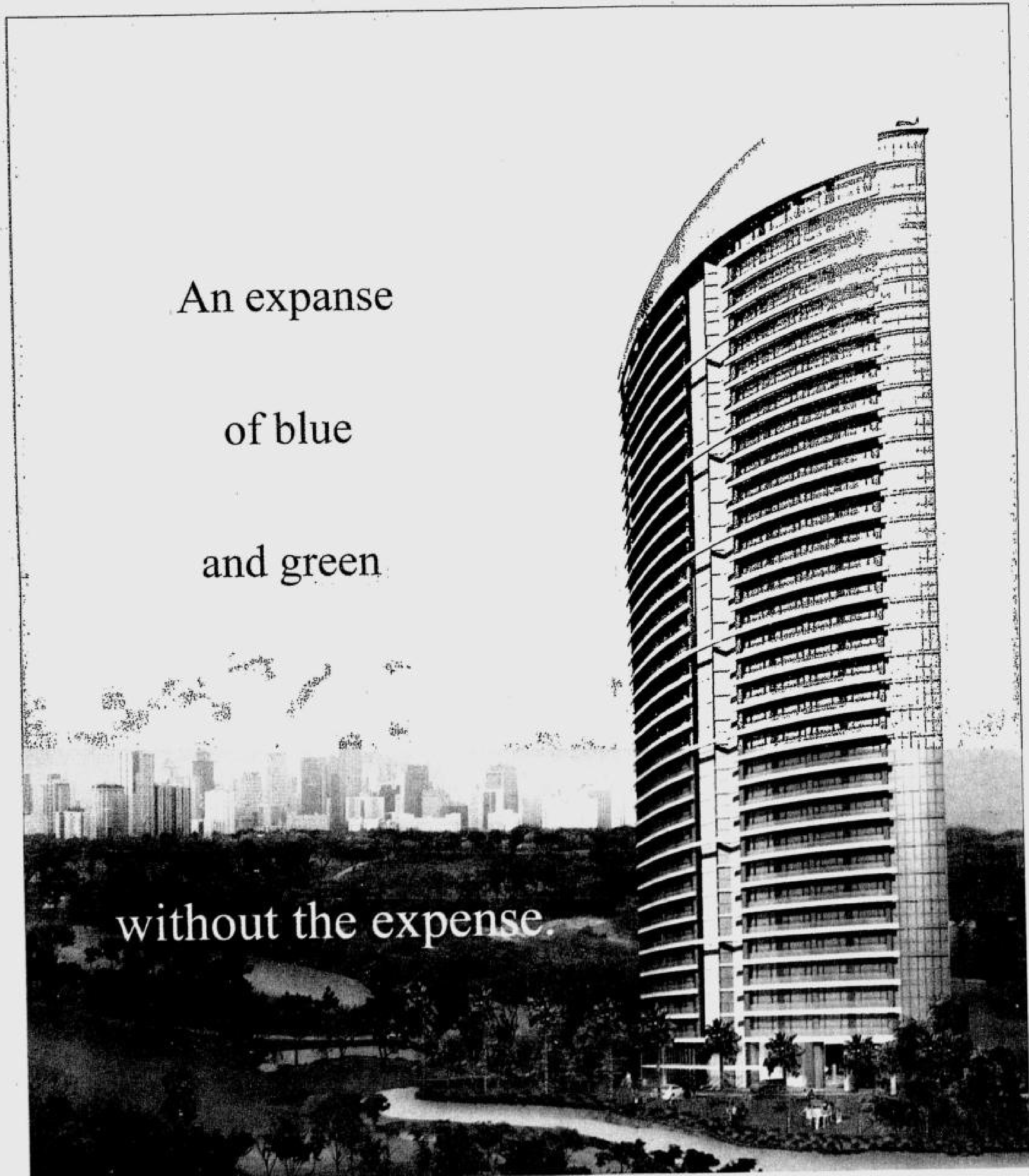
Economists said high oil prices in the world market had something to do with the slower exports.

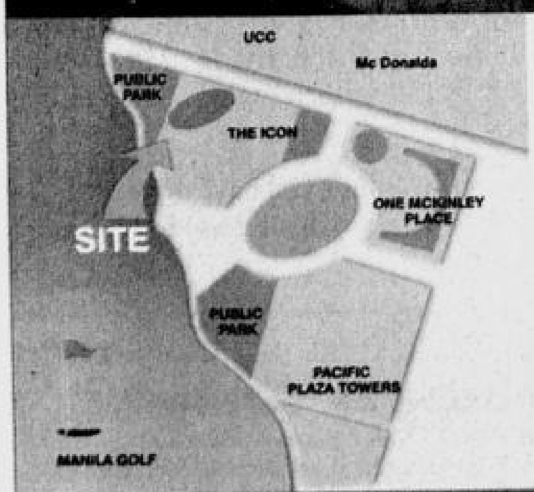
Victor Abola, economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific, explained that rising prices or oil, a basic commodity, results both in the lowering of demand for other products deemed less basic and the increase in the cost of doing business.

"Rising oil prices result in profit squeeze," he said.

But he said oil prices were not expected to adversely affect the country's exports in the second half, as prices were expected to stabilize.

Price stability, however, would depend on the decision by Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing countries to increase supply.





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RP called on to defend coconut oil

By Christine A. Gaylican

AN AMERICAN nutritionist has urged the government to defend Philippine coconut oil against the campaign in the United States, led by American soybean producers, to portray coconut oil as harmful to health.

Dr. Bruce Fife, a leading expert in the benefits of coconut oil, said in a recent briefing that the Philippines needed to act swiftly as the US Food and Drugs Administration was set to revise its food pyramid plan, and classify Philippine coconut oil under the category of saturated fats from animals.

The new classification could be included under the US FDA's food labeling requirements starting January 2006.

This would put coconut oil alongside fats that are linked to heart disease, among others.

Fife said that the Philippine coconut industry has for 20 years been taking a beating from the American Soybean Association, which wanted to convince the public that coconut oil was more of a threat to consumers.

It was only this year that the Philippine Coconut Oil Producers Association Inc. began a campaign to discredit these claims that have adversely affected exports of coconut oil.

"This [new classification] may further cut down the country's export of edible coconut oil to the US," said PCOPA president Raul Ostrea in a press briefing.

The smear campaign was estimated to have reduced potential coconut oil exports by $1 billion.

"We at the industry express outrage over the longstanding campaign of the US soybean industry to the detriment of the Philippine coconut industry," he said.

Address taxes on capital mart, RP urged

By Doris C. Dumlao

TAX PROBLEMS have prevented the capital markets of developing economies such as the Philippines from fully developing, said an expert from the International Monetary Fund.

In a joint IMF-Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas forum on the capital markets yesterday, IMF senior advisor for monetary and financial systems Herve Ferhani said withholding taxes, for instance, always discourage investors.

"Even if investors have the possibility of redeeming them [taxes withheld], they're a major impediment," Ferhani said. "It has been a perennial problem."

He said one way of catching investors' interest was to allow a tax exemption for an equivalent amount of securities income.

Ferhani said governments must find ways to limit tax distortions and instead promote tax neutrality across instrument types and investor class.

In the case of the Philippines, he noted that there was little cash circulating in the government bond market.

While there were numerous bond floats, the issue size was usually small.

He also cited the lack of an active repurchase and stock-lending market, as well as limited hedging tools in the Philippines.

But he said there had been positive developments in the country, such as the establishment of the Financial Sector Forum to improve coordination and cooperation across regulatory authorities, as well as the strengthening of financial disclosure and corporate governance requirements.

At the same time, he noted that the infrastructure for capital market reforms had been established—such as the introduction of the PhilPaSS settlement system and the fixed income exchange that was launched in March.

He said these reforms should improve transparency, reduce errors and transaction costs.

MOTORING

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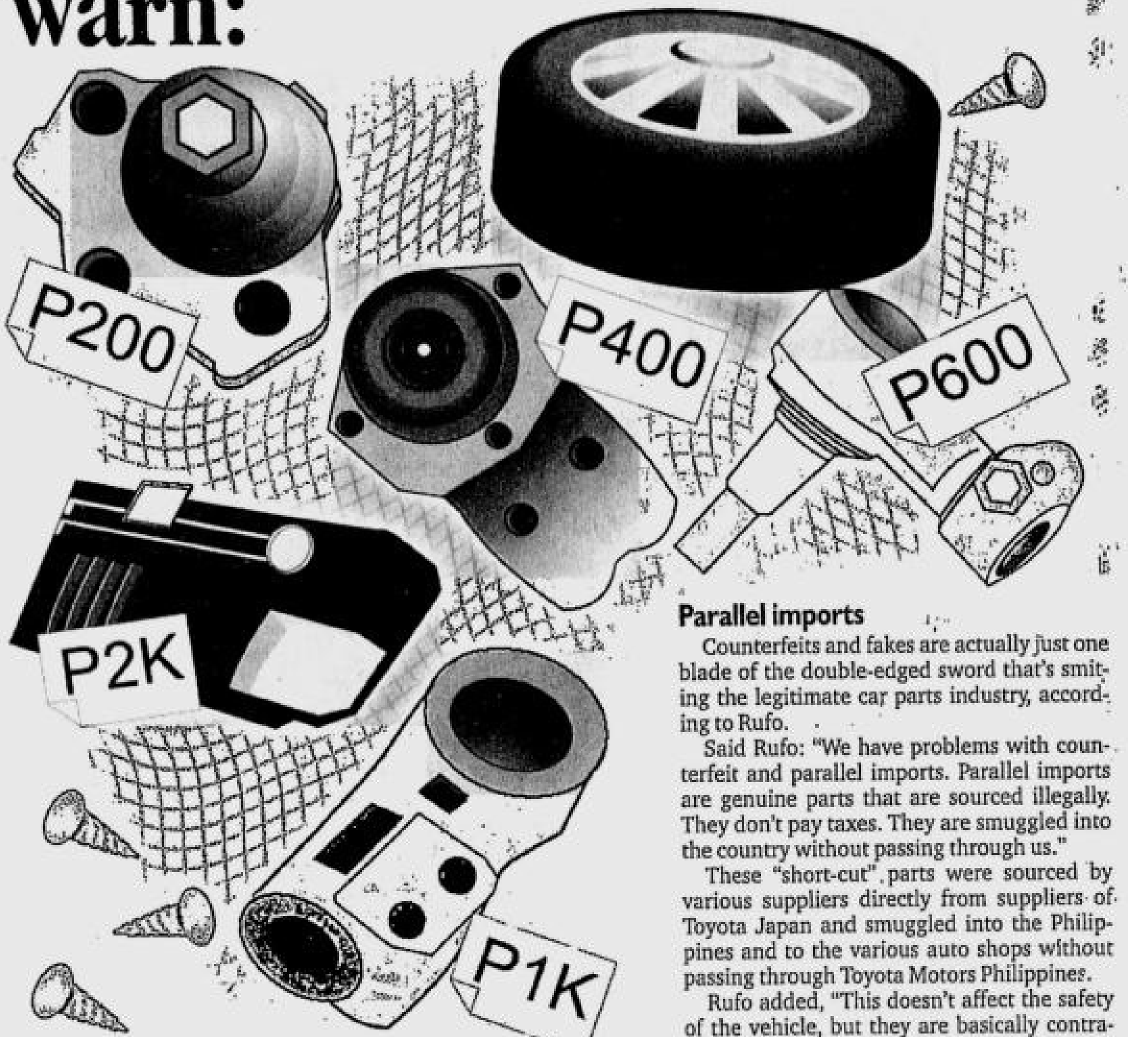
E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Engineers, mechanics warn: fakes can cost your life



By Tessa R. Salazar

THE BRAKE pads look like the real thing. You've just bought them packed in a box that says somewhere there "genuine" and the logo looks authentic.

Even the shop on Banawe Street where you bought the pad from says it's the real deal. After a few months, however, you come back to the shop with your pads worse off. The pads have burned.

You might even be one of the luckier ones who have walked away from their cars in one, albeit frustrated, piece after buying fake car parts.

Another motorist might have, unwittingly or otherwise, installed fake ball joints in his car. Sooner or later, that ball joint connected to the suspension breaks, causing one of his tires to go "bye-bye" from the rest of the suspension assembly.

A car doesn't really run right on three wheels, especially in high speeds Another might have had installed a bogus tire rod end, and before long he's running into a head-on collision, his ball and socket separated and steering component broken, and he's unable to steer away from certain death because his steering assembly just gave up on him.

Lower prices

In the free market arena, the unpredictable forces of price, supply and demand make it possible for both genuine parts makers and makers of fakes and imitation car parts to exist and thrive. Ball joints, steering rods, suspension systems, axles, transmission assemblies, brakes, brake parts, bearings and clutches. Anything genuine car parts makers can supply, fake manufacturers have it, too, at temptingly lower prices, of course.

But at what price, really? Car engineers and mechanics the INQUIRER interviewed are one in saying that imitation parts could spell disaster on the road because of inferior workmanship and less durable materials used in the manufacture of fake parts.

Fake parts manufacturers, however, have become so sophisticated in the consumer deception game that their packaging can be mistaken for the real thing. Boxes, serial numbers, logos, even down to the security codes and stickers of OEM parts—the imitators have all these down pat.

Global in scope

The problem of fake parts is global in scope. The issue of fake car parts and the dangers they pose on the road were recently discussed at an Asia-Pacific economic conference (Apec) automotive dialogue held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City.

The issue proved touchy, at the least. At one point the debate and finger pointing got so heated that a group of delegates from one country suspected of harboring fake manufacturers almost walked out of the conference.

Joseph Bautista, development engineer of Isuzu Philippines Corp., revealed that fake parts that posed a grave threat to motorists' safety could no longer be as easily detected. However, one telltale sign is their extremely low prices.

"All car manufacturers have this problem," he added. "Since spare parts are becoming expensive, people are looking for alternatives, to the detriment of their safety," he said.

He added that the fake car market is strong, especially after the warranty period of the original parts had lapsed. Secondhand car buyers, he said, were the actual customers of the fake parts makers.

2 most copied car parts

Alex P. Loinaz, an automotive technologist and road safety advocate, revealed that the two most copied car parts now are ball joints and steering components.

"There are many imitations, including those of the aftermarket original equipment manufacturer Federal Mogul, 555, NGK and Champion spark plugs," he said. Loinaz added that suspension components, particularly those from 555, are imitated.

Allen Rufo, assistant vice president for after market sales of Toyota Motors Philippines, said fake parts makers could imitate anything. They could even produce fake fuses, headlights, signal lights and bulbs that are actually short-lived.

> Anything genuine car parts makers can supply, fake manufacturers have it, too

Proliferation

Olson Camacho, mechanic and motoring journalist, said the fake car parts issue is not new. What is new, and even more alarming, he said, is the proliferation of fake parts that are posed as the original.

Camacho cited the Honda brand as a favorite among imitators. "Because of the expensive spare parts of Honda, there are several shops that claim they have original parts of Honda but these are fake." Camacho refused to name the shops that sold the fakes, only the motivation for them to do so. *"Demonyo ang presyo ng Honda kasi,"* he mused.

Camacho said replacement parts—slightly less expensive than the original parts but are recognized by car manufacturers—come from India, Bangladesh, Taiwan and China.

Fake manufacturers, Camacho cited, may claim their parts to be 555 tire rod ends and ball joints made in Japan, but they are actually fake.

The 555 brand, Camacho disclosed, is the biggest independent parts supplier of car manufacturers. It supplies ball joints and steering rods.

Parallel imports

Counterfeits and fakes are actually just one blade of the double-edged sword that's smiting the legitimate car parts industry, according to Rufo.

Said Rufo: "We have problems with counterfeit and parallel imports. Parallel imports are genuine parts that are sourced illegally. They don't pay taxes. They are smuggled into the country without passing through us."

These "short-cut" parts were sourced by various suppliers directly from suppliers of Toyota Japan and smuggled into the Philippines and to the various auto shops without passing through Toyota Motors Philippines.

Rufo added, "This doesn't affect the safety of the vehicle, but they are basically contrabands or smuggled. And we're not sure that, among 100 pieces of the smuggled parts, how many were fake."

Sources of fake parts

Asked for the actual sources of fake parts, Bautista declined to comment. He said he didn't want to strain the trade relations of Isuzu Philippines Corp. and the originating countries of the fake car parts.

So, in the end, how do ordinary motorists "spot the not"?

Bautista advised that it would always be best to buy the parts from the *casa*. But if circumstances forced a motorist to buy from shops outside the confines of the car manufacturer or dealership, it would be wise to ask for genuine parts, even if that would mean he or she would have to dig deeper into his or her pockets.

And if you think you can sue the pants off the makers of the fake headlight that just gave up on you after so short a time, you're better off charging the whole thing to experience and launch a word-of-mouth campaign to boycott the shop where the defective part was bought from. From what we know, not one bogus car parts maker has ever been prosecuted in these parts.

Latest generation of World Car of the Year arrives in RP

By Charles E. Buban

THE ARRIVAL of the latest generation Audi A6 in the Philippines will certainly give its rivals something to think about.

This new model has been highly anticipated as it is the first mainstream production car that carries the German automaker's new design evolution.

"This car has been extremely well received in other markets. In fact, even before its launch in Europe, some 12,000 customers had already ordered. Since then, close to 108,000 units have been sold worldwide," informs Claudius Meynert, Audi Asia-Pacific director, during the car's official launch last week at the newly renovated PGA Cars showroom on Edsa in Mandaluyong City.

PGA Cars Inc. is the new partner of Audi in the Philippines.

Sportiest

"Audi is among the sportiest of the luxury brands and the all-new A6 kicks it up a notch with its dynamic excellence and exceptional comfort," says Miguel Coyiuto, PGA Cars president.

Coyiuto is confident that with the latest A6, Audi will be able to perform excellently in the luxury segment and provide a refreshing alternative for many drivers who may no longer be content with driving the same car as every other luxury car driver in their neighborhood.

He adds: "Indeed, the latest A6 is well positioned to compete head-on against the traditional German players within the large sedan segment."

2 models

In the Philippines, the latest A6 will be available in two variants: a 2.4-liter V6 and a 3.0-liter V6 gasoline powered engine both equipped with multitronic continuously variable automatic transmission (price starting at P3.95 million).

Measuring 4.92 meters in length, 1.86 m in width and 1.46 m in height, 83 millimeters longer wheelbase (at 2,843 mm) compared with its predecessor, the latest A6 is visibly much bigger and roomier than its predecessor.

And yet, the latest A6 carries the character that made the model famous the world over.

LATEST/C4

MEYNERT, left, joins Audi Asia Pacific product manager Claus Korger and PGA Cars president Coyiuto, right, in examining the latest A6's powerplant

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Asian Formula 3 rookie hopes to make his mark

By Charles E. Buban

FOR PHILIPPINE junior touring car sensation Renan Ponce Morales, the first four races of the 2005 Asian Formula 3 (AF3) series have been a baptism of fire: one fourth place finish (Promotions class), an engine failure in one race, and yet to secure a position in the current drivers overall standings.

Battling in the region's most popular and fastest motorsport, the 24-year-old rookie driver of Fujitsu Ten Toyota Team Tom's has found that life in the AF3 is a different world altogether from the one he always dominates.

And yet, Morales refused to be fazed by these early-season turmoil.

"This is quite a challenge for a rookie like me as there are quite a lot of things that needed to click into place—racing in the AF3 is different as one needs to adopt a different driving style," says Morales who drives a much faster, rear-wheel-driven Dallara F398 Tom's Toyota race car.

HIS parents have always been his inspiration to begin a career in racing. At the background is Morales' mentor Mike Aguilar.

Realist

Ever the realist, he is confident that although his season is not starting as he would have liked, a podium finish is always a possibility.

Says Morales: "I am determined to score a maximum number of points from the very beginning. The season will be long and I have neither the right nor can I afford to let the slightest point slip by—in every race I'm always looking to be in a position to win the race by the time the checkered flag flies."

His mentor believes Renan is just waiting for the right opportunity to emerge.

"He's very talented and quick to learn. Besides, it's early in the season and his best racing is definitely ahead of him," says Mike Aguilar.

Tall order

For Aguilar it's a really tall order to expect Morales to be winner so soon.

"But expect him to improve with every race, his touring car exploits have demonstrated he does possess a natural talent," he assures of his driver who placed first runner-up in last year's Philippine Junior Touring Car Championship series.

WAITING for his chance for a shot at AF3 glory

Indeed, with over a hundred awards—almost half of them first placers in various production car racing events—Morales is hoping to get some in the latest discipline he is into.

Extremely happy

Right now, Morales is just extremely happy with the opportunity he has with his present team.

"There's no question I have the best team out here right now. I just found a group of guys who wanted to win and who love AF3. It's the team thing, and that's what we have here," says Morales "Plus I have very talented teammates to get inspiration from (referring to fellow drivers John O'Hara and Rodolfo Avila)."

Morales reveals he is now focusing on his next races to be held in China (referring to the Zhuhai Circuit Pan Delta Super Racing Festival in Guangdong). "I've been training every day doing cardio, running and isometric exercises as well as sticking to my strict diet regimen (tuna, potato and lots of water)," relates Morales.

He says that apart from practicing regularly, a successful race driver also needs to prepare mentally.

"Driving a race car is very demanding and there is less room for error. One needs to be tough mentally considering the high G-forces, excessive heat and anxiety one is always exposed to every race," shares Morales. "Of course, like in any game, anyone who wants to win also needs a great deal of luck on his side."

MORALES says he has the best team supporting his latest career move.

Cebu Summer Sound-off Challenge hits high decibel

CEBU'S most progressive car audio club the Mobile Audio Association of Cebu (Maac) recently announced the winners of its recently held sound-off party and audio competition dubbed the "Cebu Summer Sound-Off Challenge" held in the island's capital city.

Equipped with the most expensive, state-of-the-art amplifiers, subwoofer and speakers bearing names like Rockford-Fostgate, Kicker, DLS and Lightning Audio, 20 of Cebu's most audibly-delicious cars came face-to-face in a showdown that sets the tone for the upcoming mobile car audio events to come.

"It is a truly awesome experience to see vehicles that have been transformed into these sound machines battle it off here in Cebu," says Rolando Navea, one mobile audio enthusiast from Bacolod. "It is something straight out of the competitions done in Manila and even abroad," he adds.

Fierce

Competitions were fierce in all classes with the most eardrum-splitting sound-off at the 751 square inch and up category.

Rey Suico, won this most difficult challenge with his car producing a staggering 151.6 decibels (dB) at measuring point. Janby Yu followed closely with a 150.0-dB output from his multi-amplifier vehicle.

Suico and Yu also finished in the same 1-2 spots in the 501 to 750 square inch category with outputs measured over 50 dB.

Other class winners were Ryan Yu for the 251 to 500 square inch category, immediately followed by Rey Suico again. It was Steve Sumalinog who ruled in the 1 to 250 square inch category with a 143.6 dB reading.

Start of something big

"This is the start of something big in Cebu for this kind of competition," says Nesty Lim, head judge of the event. "It is a kind of grassroots event that brings enthusiasts together for a friendly, yet fierce competition."

The US-trained Lim, known in the audiophile circles for his expertise in managing competitions like this, also believes the new computerized equipment he uses in determining the winner leaves out subjective human judgment.

"These automated systems ensure that the competition is fair—simply because these systems require less human intervention and their results are quick and virtually error-free."

Just for show

One competitor, 18-year-old Jacqueline Tan who arrived in her white Rockford-Fostgate and Kicker equipped Nissan X-Trail attended the event "just for show."

She went home with more than praises for her vehicle as she in fact won the Best Setup award.

Organizers of the Cebu Summer Sound-Off Challenge are planning a next round to this event which already has been given the accolade "the most anticipated audio competition of the south."

Ford Escape 2.3L named Car of the Year 2005

FORD Escape Duratec 2.3L secures its leadership in the compact SUV market anew after it was announced by the organizing committee of the 26th Bangkok International Motor Show as the winner of "Car of the Year 2005, benzene-engine SUV category" award.

The Car of the Year award is held every year and the winners are announced during the annual Bangkok International Motor Show.

The jury is comprised of specialists and representatives from involved organizations including academics, Automotive and Motorcycles Reporters Association, the Royal Automobile Association of Thailand under Royal Patronage, and Grand Prix International Co. Ltd.

Big pact between Isuzu and GM

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

MY belief about Isuzu being the world's best diesel engine maker has not waned one bit. This was all the more reinforced by the recent pact forged between General Motors Corp. and Isuzu. In that pact, GM, the world's largest carmaker, appointed Isuzu as the sole supplier of diesel engines to GM's trucks and small passenger cars.

For nearly 70 years, no other vehicle assembler has managed to associate its reputation with diesel engines as closely and credibly as Isuzu has. Ask the average car owner about the first name that comes to mind at the mere mention of diesel, and you'd almost certainly get Isuzu for an answer.

Beginning with its first air-cooled diesel unit produced in 1936, Isuzu has, time and again, revolutionized the diesel engine to adapt it to the ever-changing needs and demands of the motoring public.

After the company was named in 1955 as the sole supplier of diesel engines for the Japanese National South Pole's explorations, Isuzu steadily became a trustworthy technical partner to various automotive and industrial equipment companies as a supplier of diesel engines on an OEM basis.

* * *

To date, Isuzu has produced about 18 million diesel engine units worldwide and has a stable of no less than 60 diesel engines, ranging from the one-liter motor used in a mini-backhoe all the way to the 30-liter power plant used in heavy-duty tractors.

Diesel engineering has never been this scientific.

Technologies pioneered and championed by Isuzu—including turbocharging and intercooling, direct-injection fuel systems and electronically controlled common-rail fuel injection—have also now been adopted and applied by other vehicle assemblers. As a result, diesel engines these days are generally cleaner, quieter, more powerful and more refined, and more fuel-efficient than they were before.

Records show Isuzu has dominated truck sales for six consecutive years. Figures released by the Truck Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (TMA) showed Isuzu's light-trucks, the N-Series line or popularly known as the Elf, have topped the charts anew with a record of 72 percent market share in the total industry light-truck sales.

The Isuzu F-Series, or the Isuzu Forward, remained a consistent top seller with a year-to-date 92 percent share of the total industry medium-truck sales.

Boasting of perfectly engineered design and style, beastly engine, and innovative exterior and interior features, the D-Max has remained the vehicle of choice in terms of elegance, luxury and power.

Said Arthur Balmadrid, IPC vice president for Corporate Business Division: "We continuously review the products we offer and attune them to market preferences in providing top quality commercial vehicles for the Filipino market."

* * *

VALUABLE VOLVO. A gleaming collection of Volvo vehicles was the centerpiece of the Volvo Lifestyle Area in the recent 1st Manila Motor Show at the World Trade Center. The Volvos on display, with their sporty exterior styling and other feature add-ons, became consistent crowd-drawers during the show. Guests were drawn to the cool, refreshing and congenial atmosphere of the Volvo Lifestyle Area and were aptly recognized by organizer Worldbex Services International as the "Best Display Area." Incidentally, today (Wednesday) is also a big day for Volvo as it officially inducts Cebu at the famed Tower Club as the first city in the South to have a Volvo dealership. Take a bow, Albert, Lyn and Loi? Cheers!

* * *

TERRIFIC TOYOTA. Asia's No. 1 carmaker just keeps them coming. Just recently, it unleashed two newly developed hybrid SUVs in Tokyo—the Harrier Hybrid and Kluger Hybrid. The Harrier Hybrid will be sold through "Toyopet" dealers ("Osaka Toyota" in the Osaka area) and the Kluger Hybrid through "Toyota Corolla" and "Netz Toyota" dealers. The Harrier and Kluger Hybrids are equipped with the newly developed high-power Toyota Hybrid System II (THS II), built around the concept of Hybrid Synergy Drive that represents a sophisticated fusion of ecology and power. Both vehicles feature the E-Four (electric 4-wheel drive) system, which drives the rear wheels using a rear motor, and advanced Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management (VDIM), which coordinates control and achieves an optimum balance among drive power, steering and braking. The new hybrid SUVs seek to achieve dynamic performance on par with a V8-powered SUV, as well as high levels of maneuverability and stability that greatly heighten the "fun to drive" quotient. And to think Toyota's Prius, the original hybrid, has been receiving rave reviews the world over. I can't wait to see these latest wonders from Toyota.

* * *

HONEST HONDA. Nikkei recently reported that Honda's Fit, a car similar to the Honda Jazz in Manila according to Tin Tin Reyes, ranked first in environmental friendliness among compact models, according to a survey conducted by The Nikkei Business Daily and the Nikkei Research Institute of Industry and Markets. Toyota's Vitz was in second place, and Mitsubishi's Colt Casual came in third. Cars were evaluated in the following four categories: energy conservation and greenhouse gas emissions as demonstrated by, for example, fuel consumption and volume of coolants used; compliance with gas emission regulations, including those governing nitric oxides; recycling; and reduction of harmful substances. The top-ranking Fit was first in the category of fuel consumption, with an efficient 24 km to a liter of gasoline. It was also the lowest in volume of carbon dioxide emissions. In addition, it led the way in reduction of harmful substances, including lead and hexavalent chromium. Do I see Arnel Doria smiling?

* * *

QUOTE ME. It's hot. Don't make it hotter by keeping your cool while driving. Don't honk that horn.

VOLVO booth

1965 Mustang convertible wins Best of Show award

THE RECENTLY concluded Trans Sport Show 2005 at the Megatrade Hall was a certified success with record crowds packing the trade hall every day during the five-day event.

The main crowd drawers were the vintage, classic and contemporary show cars entered in the Trans Sport Show Cup Open Class Competition.

Best of Show

This year's show judges, led by Japanese historic car racer OD Hasegawa, had their hands full trying to break tied scores among car entries from several categories. After much deliberation, a majority vote was cast and the judges declared the 1965 Ford Mustang convertible owned by Felix Chan as this year's "Best of Show" winner.

The car was restored by Alex Car Restoration, which is no stranger in the car show circuit, having won the much-coveted top award three times already in the past. The rangoon red Mustang also won first in the Vintage Convertible category. It also bagged the Best in Paint award.

Other winners

Mel Felix's 1971 BMW 3.0CSI, entered by Route 66, was awarded first runner-up for the Best of Show category and placed first in the European Classic category.

DC Autosports' 1999 Honda Civic SiR won Best Engine Display and first place in the Contemporary 4-door Super Modified category. The 2004 Mazda 3 of A-Toy Body Kits was adjudged Best Body Kit and won first place in the Millennium Sedan Asian Modified category.

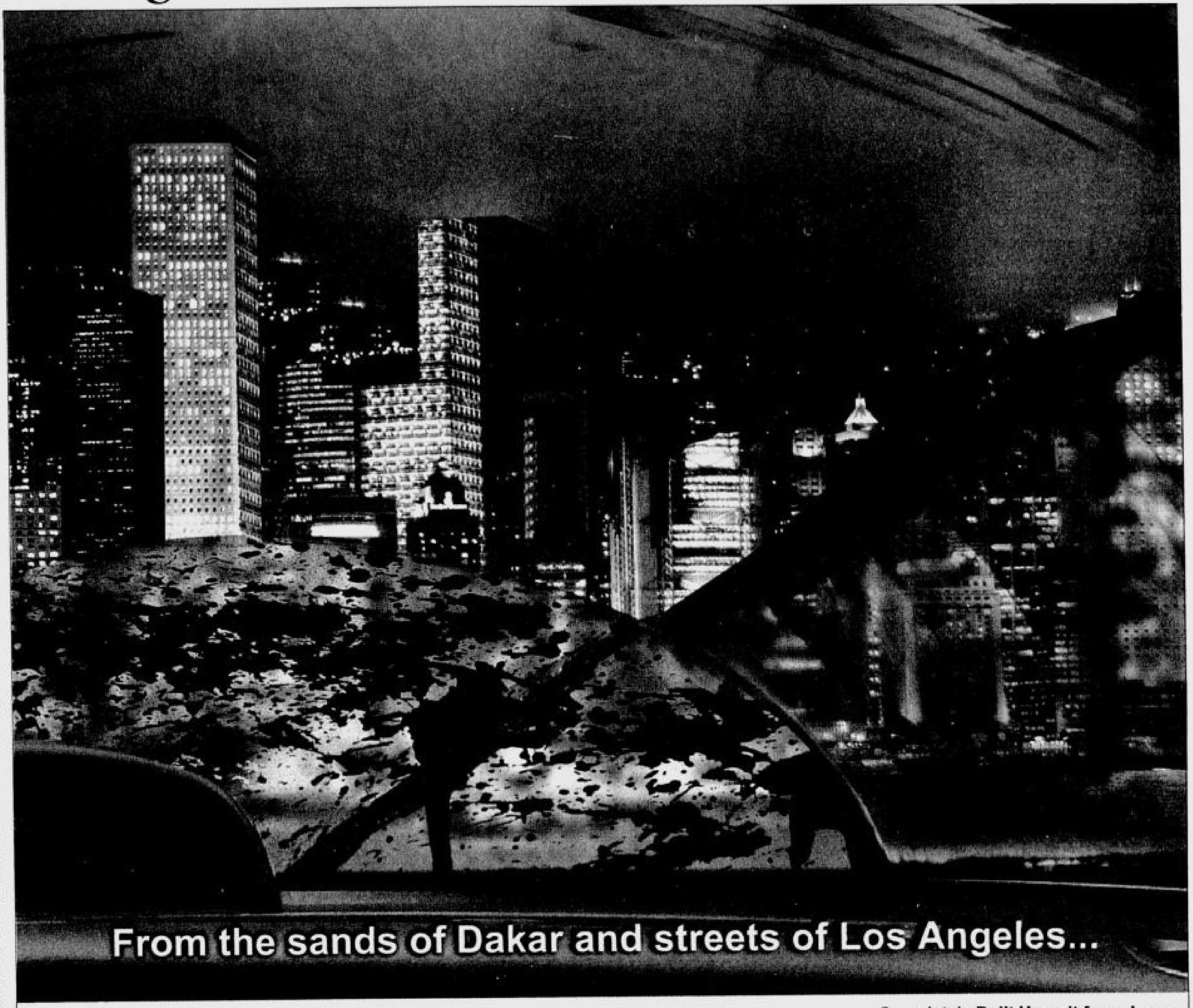
Best Airbrush went to the 1996 Honda Vti of Norman Agojo. Best Extreme Mobile Sound Installer was won by Vic Pena's Honda Jazz. Best Car Graphics was given to the 1998 Mitsubishi Galant of Options Unlimited. Roiscar Autoshoppe's 1992 Mitsubishi Galant won the Best Car Display and Mark Pineda's 1972 Datsun 240 Z was awarded Best Newcomer.

For the corporate exhibitors, the Ambi Pur booth was given the Best Corporate Pavilion award and Halden Galway as Best Booth Display. Moreover, Gerely Joyce de Guzman of Hydro Octane Booster was named Ms Trans Sports Show 2005.

Free car seminars

INVESTING wisely to maintain a car's optimum performance offers a lot of advantages that can save one from costly repairs, unnecessary inconvenience, consequential damages, or worse, vehicle accident. With proper maintenance, a car will get fewer breakdowns, thus, owners will have fewer trips to the service centers.

Honda Cars Pasig conducts free seminars on basic car care, preventive maintenance and troubleshooting, equipping Honda vehicle owners with helpful know-how in car maintenance and solving common automobile concerns. To inquire about the dealership's upcoming driving seminar schedules, call the Customer Relations Department at 636-8092 or 634-2730 locals 102 to 105.



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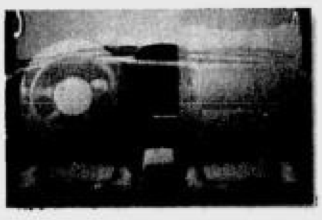
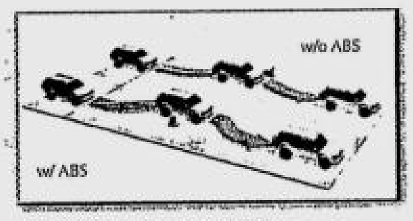

Dual SRS Airbags



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Poor quality gasoline

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IN THESE DAYS of galloping fuel price increases, the quality of the gasoline we buy at a higher price takes primary importance. As a savvy motorist, you don't want to pay hard-earned money for poor quality gasoline—gasoline that has inadequate levels of detergent additives and/or inadequate octane levels.

Proper levels of dispersant-detergent additives in gasoline clear away carbon and varnish deposits and keep fuel injectors, cylinder intake valves and combustion chambers clean and operating efficiently. However, to increase their profit margins some oil companies may reduce or eliminate the detergents or use low-quality detergents that allow deposit buildups. Although detergents cost only a fraction of a peso per liter, it adds up to an immense sum because of the large volumes of gasoline sold.

Clogged

Over time, the clogging of intake valves and fuel injectors fouls up your engine and adversely affects performance and fuel economy. It can create engine stalling during acceleration and increase emissions. Eventually, you may be compelled to have the injectors, intake valves and combustion chamber cleaned at a service shop. All of which translates into more money spent.

In 1995, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set minimal detergent standards for gasoline sold in the United States. But industry sources claim that about 85 percent of all US gasoline contain only one-tenth of the EPA standard. The Alliance for Automobile Manufacturers (AAM) takes fuel samples in 26 US cities twice a year. In 1998, according to AAM tests, the amount of detergents in gasoline dropped more than 20 percent since 1996 and by 2002, it had declined about 50 percent.

In 2002, the carmakers cited persistent repair problems, such as significant deposit buildup in as little as 5,000 miles, and troubling product tests to conclude that the quality of US gasoline varies widely, that different brands have different detergent levels and often do not burn clean enough to keep engines running smoothly.

Top tier

In the summer of 2004, four car manufacturers—Toyota Motor Corp., Honda Motor Co., General Motors Corp. and BMW—teamed up to recommend gasoline that meets a higher standard for detergents than the one set by the EPA. They called this the Top Tier Detergent Gasoline Standard and named some brands such as Shell, Chevron and Conoco to the "Top Tier" list. But the EPA insisted that the detergent standard they had established back in 1995 was adequate.

Over here, we have no EPA to set detergent standards in gasoline and no way of checking whether the gasoline we buy has sufficient levels of effective detergent additives. If 85 percent of gasoline in the United States is substandard in detergent levels, what more in a Third World country like ours where the regulation of fuel quality is lax?

All we have are advertisements in which oil companies claim that their fuels enhance performance, reduce emissions and improve gasoline mileage. Burdened by continuously escalating fuel prices, consumers can only hope that there is some truth in their advertising.

Octane

Gasoline with inadequate octane levels poses another quality problem. A gasoline's octane rating, often called its "anti-knock index," is simply a measurement of the fuel's ability to resist the engine knocking, rattling or pinging that results from premature ignition in the combustion chamber. Engine knock robs the engine of power and can lead to serious engine damage.

Some oil companies in their marketing campaigns like to emphasize the powerful performance that their high-octane fuel provides. However, this kind of advertising encourages car owners to buy expensive gasoline with an octane level higher than what is actually required by the engine in their car. Every engine is designed and tuned to an octane requirement specified in the vehicle owner's manual. Once that octane requirement has been met, your car will not experience more power or better mileage if you use a higher octane fuel. In other words, you will be just wasting money if you buy higher octane fuel.

Impossible

On the other hand, motorists can never be sure that they are getting the octane rating they are paying for. Although gasoline dealers post the octane rating on the front of each fuel pump, it is impossible to determine whether or not posted octane ratings match what is being sold.

Unfortunately, the Philippines is reputed to have the poorest quality fuel in Southeast Asia. The diesel fuel sold here is particularly notorious for its high sulfur content although all fuels have some sulfur in them. When burned, fuel with a high sulfur content will produce acids that eat at cylinder walls and pistons and leave an abrasive residue that can cause extreme wear in moving parts. And that's not even mentioning the impact of poor quality fuel on public health and the environment.

(Sources: The Wall Street Journal, Amsoil and Encyclopedia of Motoring)

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Never put off till tomorrow what you can avoid altogether.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

Heat

CATCH MY DRIFT

Andre Palm

THE BRUNT of summer 2005 is definitely upon us, its constant searing heat inescapable even in the climate-controlled environment of our cars' cabins. With the mercury drawing near body temperature (35 to 37 degrees Celsius), Manila will soon resemble a simmering pot of sinigang, complete with the sour concoction of our sweaty metropolis' smells.

We, drivers and passengers alike, are in for a most certain temperature (and olfactory) beating, probably the likes none of us have locally experienced before. What's really bad is that our cars will be subjected to the same torturous temperatures while still being asked to soldier on, without fail, in the microwave oven that is Philippine traffic.

This is the best time to examine and understand the way our vehicles deal with the issue of heat. Most cars will use some form or version of the internal combustion engine to provide power for propulsion. This is a system that uses pressure and fire to produce energy that is used to get a vehicle moving. In reality, the energy created by the engine in this manner is not wholly translated to motorized movement, some amount of the generated energy is wasted as noise and heat.

Heat management

As with all things mechanical, the older an engine gets, the less efficient it becomes. Manufacturing clearances wear out and an increasing amount of energy supposed to be going to your wheels goes to making weird vibrations, noises and ultimately more heat from your car's power plant. Most cars deal with heat management via a system comprised of a radiator and water pump.

Most water pumps are run by a belt connection to the vehicle's main drive pulley and crank. The job of the water pump is to ensure that liquid is kept flowing in gullies around the nooks and crannies of your engine block as heat exchange occurs because of this. Water takes on the heat that is generated from the engine that otherwise would turn into a very expensive lump of aluminum, precious metals and rubber. This is the first step in lowering the temperature of an engine.

A maze of pipes and tubes complement the cooling system of your car, allowing the now super heated water to travel to the second key destination in the car's cooling system: the radiator. This heat exchanger, found right smack in a vehicle's front air flow, uses onrushing air to cool the circulating water to a safe temperature. As ambient air passes over the fins and canals of a radiator it takes on the heat found in the water and this is dissipated into the surrounding environment, away from the engine.

Overheating

Any failure in this system could have disastrous results. The tremendous temperatures generated by a vehicle's power plant can, very readily, destroy it. The most common damage caused by overheating is a warping engine's head (the section that physically handles the intake of air and exhaust of waste gas for the engine). If the flush flat coupling of this part is compromised with that of the engine's block (the section that encloses the pistons, connecting rods and crank), then the quality of combustion is compromised, resulting in loss of power and, sadly, more overheating.

Extreme negligence or necessity may cause the engine to be run well beyond its limit of thermal survivability. When excessive temperatures are reached, the pistons begin to melt and actually fuse with the cylinder walls of the combustion chamber, which causes an engine seizure. This hopefully occurs without fragmentation from the shattered and molten pistons peppering the rest of the engine bay. Engines that have reached this level of abuse are really and truly dead.

Best liquid

Always ensure that the vehicle is running the right amount of liquid in its cooling system. Too little or too much water or coolant will eventually lead to the degradation of your car's ability to deal with heat. The best liquid for filling your radiator is a nonacidic solution without any sort of minerals or contamination. The addition of a chemical coolant extends the boil over point of the radiator fluid.

Some additives also serve to clean out the years of rust and sludge that can accumulate due to the use of plain tap water. The system's hoses must continue to feel pliant and flexible to the touch and any sort of stiffening or cracking should immediately warrant a trip to the shop for replacement.

A simple understanding of how the temperature management system of your car works can pay dividends in the heat of the coming weeks. Simple maintenance and common sense will allow for hours of trouble-free tooling around in traffic. So if you have not given the radiator of your vehicle a look in recent memory, now is a good time to see if this needs attention. Better to deal with the issue at home in your own garage, than out on the road, under the merciless noon-time sun.

Car show

Bimmerfest, cheer tilt, Everest test drive

Compiled by Tessa Salazar

SEE custom cars, bikes and brand-new cars from May 14 to 30 at Autocycle Show 2005 at Eastwood City. Gawk at technology and gadget displays. Interested car accessory shops, dealers and the public can call MexNet at 453-1159 or 453-1316.

* * *

LAUNCH PAD

The BMW Car Club of the Philippines will be holding Bimmerfest 2005 on May 21 at the Ateneo-side car park at the Rockwell Power Plant Mall.

The activity is a show-and-shine type car event that will showcase the range of members' BMW vehicles. These would cover heritage, modern and specialty cars.

Bimmerfest starts at 1 p.m. and ends at midnight.

The BMW Car Club of the Philippines has more than 100 members. It was given the certification by the International Council of BMW Clubs as the only recognized BMW Car Club in the Philippines.

* * *

Isuzu Philippines recently held its SEE Technology (safety, economy and environment friendliness) marketing campaign via a cheering stunt competition. Leading cheer teams from Metro universities shouted, twirled, danced and somersaulted for the P100,000 pot money.

In the end, the winning team was Central Colleges of the Philippines, with runner-ups Emilio Aguinaldo College and University of Makati.

The other winners included Mapua, Letran, PLM (Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila), Polytechnic University of the Philippines and New Era University. The Isuzu SEE Technology cheerleading stunt competition, together with the Intercollegiate cheerleading competition was held at Market! Market! in Taguig.

* * *

Meanwhile, Ford culminates Everest 4x4 test fest in Fairview Quezon City on May 14.

The Ford Everest 4x4 Test Fest moves to Fairview, Quezon City, specifically on Regalado Avenue (near SM Supermall) on Saturday.

Ford Group Philippines' Tonette Lee invites the public to the event, which will include a 4x4 test-drive track that will allow every driver to experience the performance of the Everest.

Some of the obstacles featured on the track will be a gravel stretch and a mud pit (to test traction on dry and wet surfaces), a twister mound (to check chassis agility and body sway), rock mound (to test suspension) and the highly popular teeter-totter (to test total vehicle performance).

A 4x4 drive demo will be provided at regular intervals to show a few of the vehicle's capabilities. The Ford Everest test drive continues to draw crowds during its regular Saturday runs at different venues. Ford encourages entire families to get into the car and drive. Marshalls accompany the test drivers through the track, giving them a mini 4x4 drive clinic in the process. Ford says the event is a different kind of family weekend.

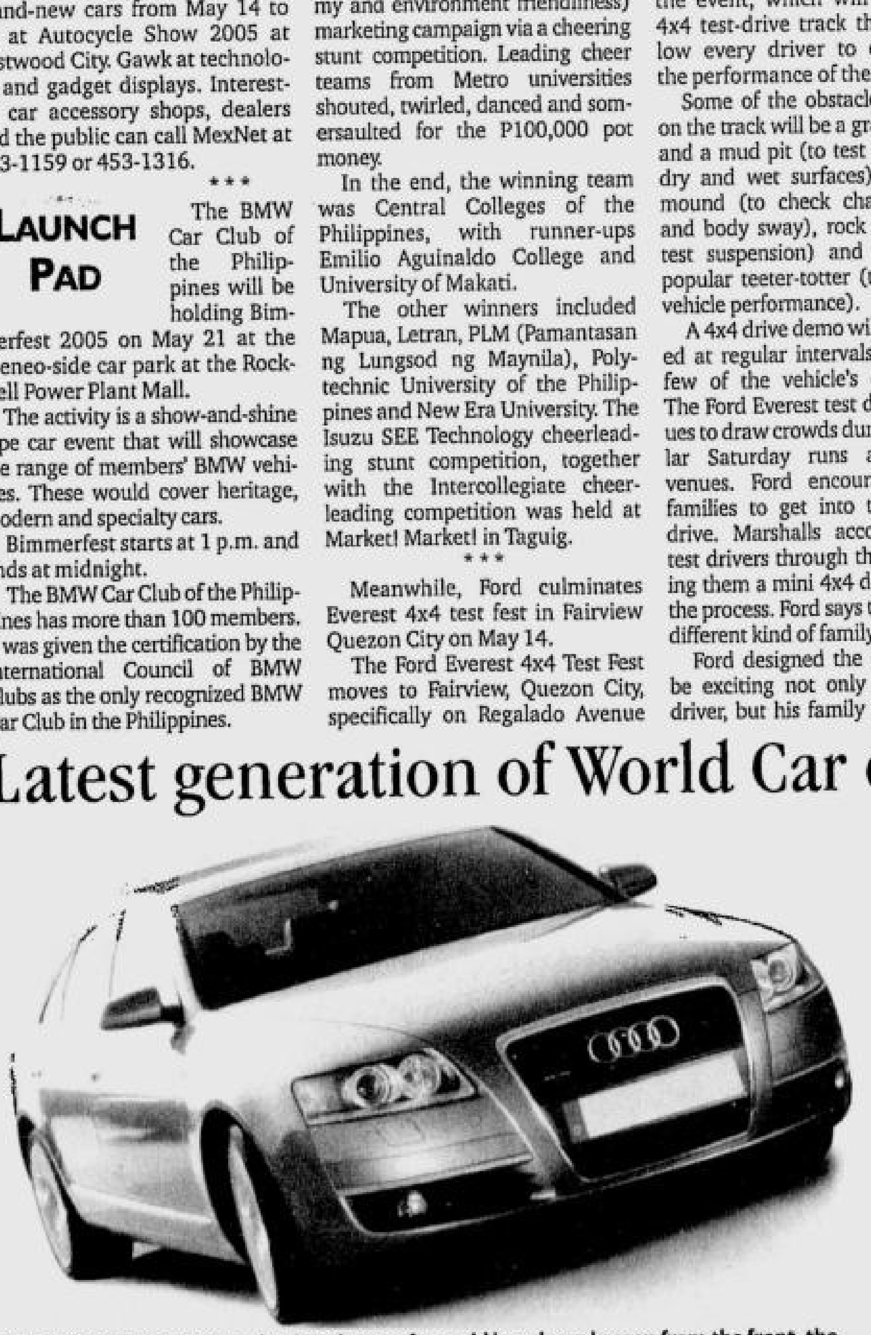
Ford designed the test drive to be exciting not only for the test driver, but his family as well. The audience was treated to an exciting test-drive demo by professional and trained 4x4 enthusiasts. The course set out to prove the truck-like characteristics of the vehicle.

"We pride ourselves in being Built Ford Tough. All over the world, we are known for making real trucks, not pretend ones. At the Ford Everest test fest, get into a Ford Everest and experience firsthand why our SUVs and trucks continue to gain the respect of the market," says Luie Dy Buncio, vice president for sales and marketing, Ford Group Philippines.

The ride-and-drive activity's first leg was held at The Fort grounds, coinciding with the Automobile of the Year Show, its second leg was held at World Trade Center and the third was in San Fernando-Olongapo City.

It is designed to give the public a firsthand experience of the capability of the Ford Everest. Ford Group Philippines invites the public to test-drive its top-selling SUV, the Ford Everest, at the Ford Everest 4X4 Test Fest held every Saturday and culminating on May 14.

Latest generation of World Car of the Year . . .



THE LATEST A6 is designed to break away from old benchmark: seen from the front, the trapezoidal single-frame grille is a striking badge of Audi's new design direction and the representation of the latest generation of Audi models.

From page C1

"The A6 line has received numerous awards and accolades from consumers and the media alike. Among others, the A6 sedan emerged from a field of 36 competitors to claim the inaugural World Car of the Year award early this year," informs Coyiuto who expects a three-digit sales mark for the car by the end of 2006.

Aggressive

Audi has embarked on an aggressive product expansion strategy in the Asia-Pacific region and continues to put fresh cars in the region that appeal to the most sophisticated customers.

"The new A6 is one of the 10 new cars that Audi will launch in the Asia-Pacific region over the next five years," announces Meynert.

He says with the commitment of PGA Cars, he is confident the brand and the business will rise to new heights in the country.

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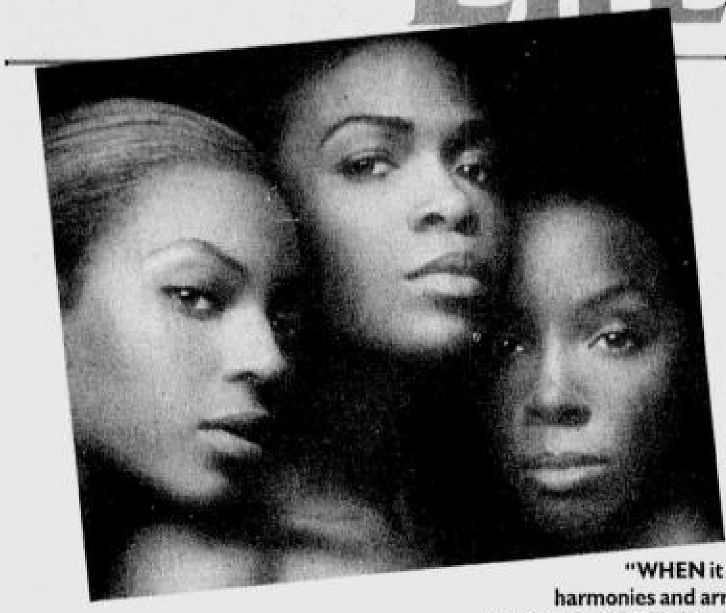

"**WHEN** it came to the harmonies and arrangements, we really challenged ourselves here."

DESTINY FULFILLED

Can you handle this?

MORE breadth and depth. Destiny's Child's new album is far more mature and focused , exposing a vulnerability they've never shown before.

Tim Yap

SYDNEY, Australia—The stage wasn't big enough for the three divas of pop and R&B. In fact, the whole world isn't big enough to handle the global successes of **Beyoncé Knowles, Michelle Williams** and **Kelly Rowland**, otherwise known as Destiny's Child, now back in each other's chocolate-colored arms to fulfill a destiny.

When they parted ways after doing the "Survivor" album way back 2001, their loyal fans felt that three years seemed like a lifetime. But they needed to find themselves, get into their respective solo careers to find their superlative selves. Only after then did they make their reunion album, "Destiny Fulfilled," released late 2004.

Michelle was the first member to have a solo project released. She went into gospel music which topped the gospel charts. "People were surprised when I did gospel music. They said—what? You do Destiny's Child and now you're singing gospel? What they don't realize is that gospel music is supposed to be about the good news, and God is about loving each other, not judging." She also did Broadway, playing the lead in "Aida" after **Toni Braxton**.

Kelly's solo venture featured "Dilemma," a duet she did with superstar **Nelly**—it got the number one slot in the UK and won for her a Grammy. She is now engaged to be married to Dallas Cowboy **Roy Williams**. "I'm getting ready to be a wife!"

Working apart

Beyoncé ventured into the movies, debuting with MTV's "Carmen: A Hip Hopera," but it was her role as Foxy Cleopatra in "Austin Powers: Goldmember" that got her the most attention. She followed this up with "Fighting Temptations" with **Cuba Gooding Jr.** and the remake of "Pink Panther" with **Steve Martin** as Inspector Clouseau and Beyoncé as Xania, to be shown this year.

Her solo album "Dangerously In Love" went multi-platinum, and her "Crazy In Love" single with boyfriend **Jay Z** won for her five Grammy awards. The last time I met and interviewed her (in Phuket, Thailand in 2001), she didn't have a voice and that body. Now, my jaw dropped when I saw her.

Working apart from each other made the Destiny girls realize how important they are to each other. "These girls are my sisters," said Kelly, in an interview and shoot with V magazine where they all wore **Helmut Lang**, in stark contrast to their House of Dereon outfits (designed by Beyoncé's mom **Tina Knowles**) studded with Swarovski crystals.

"Coming back together again will inspire other groups to support each other, be happy for each other, and to let people know it's all

CAN YOU/ D2

LOSING their breath while fulfilling their destiny; Beyoncé onstage in Sydney (below)

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Can you handle this?

From page D1

right to go out on your own, but it's also all right to come back together," said the girls before their show, "Destiny Fulfilled World Tour 2005," hit the Land Down Under. "We're stronger and more self assured and you'll hear that in our new album."

MOVING AND SOULFUL. "Destiny Fulfilled" is a story of a woman's journey through the highs and lows of falling in and out of love.

CAN YOU KEEP UP?
34

Concert kinks

Not that coming together didn't bring any kinks. A day before the show, during rehearsals, Michelle and Beyoncé had a misunderstanding onstage over the sound system, prompting the two jet-lagged cats to have a heated exchange in front of production staffers and select media present.

Well, try putting three gorgeous and extremely talented girls together and the ensuing action is really hard to resist—that's why we love them so much. They're just like you and me (okay, maybe not me)—only darker, and bigger.

But come showtime, they were all relaxed with each other, the support and love evident with their rapport onstage.

New artist **Mario** (who is being managed by **Matthew Knowles**, Beyoncé's dad) opened the show, seducing Australians with his top of the pops ditty, "Let Me Love You," as he showed off a vocal prowess that prompted another R&B royalty to proclaim,

"He has one of the most beautiful voices I have ever heard," said **Alicia Keys**.

When the three arrived, belting out "Say My Name," a screen projected their larger-than-life selves, in wind-blown hair and sequin-studded outfits—and the crowd went wild.

The Destiny Dynasty girls bombarded the star-crazed audience with one-two-three punches of "Independent Women," "No No No," "Bills Bills Bills," "Bootylicious" and "Jumpin Jumpin." Wow, wow!

'Soldier' to 'Cater 2 U'

They then transported their crowd into combat zone, with male dancers doing synchronized mechanical movements with the next song, "Soldier," from their new "Destiny Fulfilled" album.

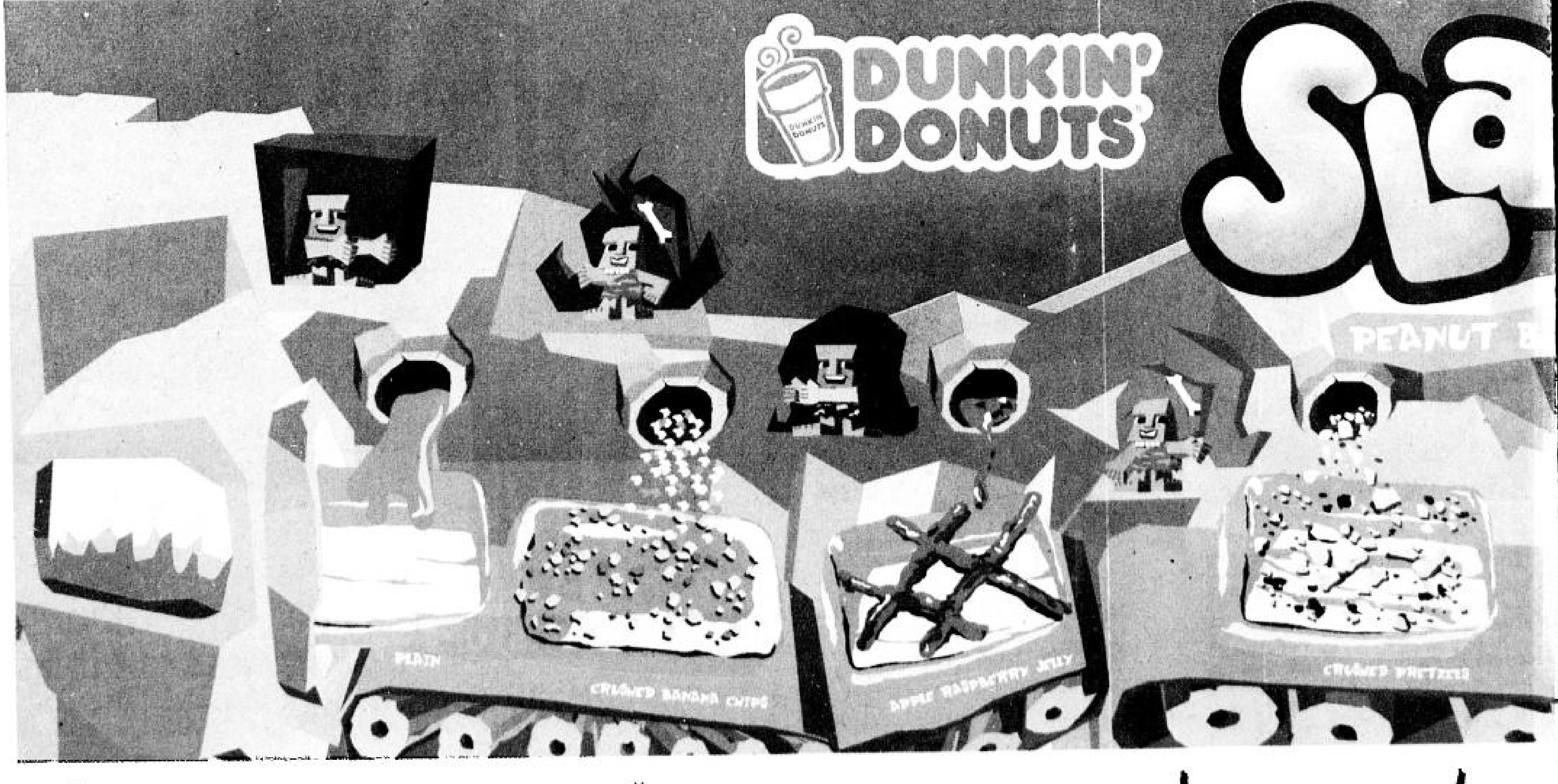
The girls then went on to their solo numbers, one gimmick-laden production number after another—Kelly, like a modern Broadway chick with a dozen feather fan dancers; and Michelle in a pink showstopper, doing a torch version (complete with back bends, a la **Pilita Corrales**) of her gospel hit. Beyoncé entered as an Arabian princess in knits, carried by 10 muscular men, as she hit all the high notes.

They followed this up with their other singles from their latest album, "Cater 2 U" and "Girl." The latter song has a hit video, with the three girls spoofing Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda, our favorite "Sex and the City" girls.

Other unforgettable stage moments were Beyoncé throwing away her skirt to reveal a lingerie-clad va-va-voom body, the female dancers' doing solo spot numbers and the

"OUR solo projects and this album prove what we already knew—that every woman in this group can stand on her own."

A WOMAN'S emotional growth. "When you have this sort of friendship, recording doesn't feel like work."



SNAPSHOTS from their concert in Sydney (above); DC's V mag cover, shot by Inez Van Lamswerdee and Vinoodh Matadin (left)

three girls' gold outfits—metallic never looked that lustrous.

Singing superheroes

When they sang "Lose my Breath," I almost lost mine dancing along with them, but what truly took my breath away was their encore, with flamenco dancers and fancy footwork for "Survivor": *"I'm gonna make it, I'm not gonna give up, I'm not gonna stop, I'm gonna work harder, keep on surviving..."*

I suddenly realized that to their followers, these girls are R&B wonder women, superheroes armed with a mantra of female empowerment. It gave me goosebumps listening to their lyrics. Beneath all the fluff and froufrou, these girls carried with them messages of hope, strength and modern femininity.

In their latest album, people may be surprised that they are now singing songs that speak about them losing their guard (saying out loud what they want in a guy with "I want a soldier...") and actually falling in love (naked devotion to the tune of *"Let me take off your shoes, let me feed you with whatever you desire..."*)

"Love concludes the story, because we find the love we've always had with God—that's the destiny that's been fulfilled because the woman is searching for love, and eventually she finds in in God and herself, and because of that she can eventually find love with a man," says Beyoncé, who is going strong with rapper Jay Z.

After being independent women, these ladies are now ready to cater to men, who will do anything at the crack of their femme fatale's whip.

For some, that's destiny, and reality.

E-mail the author at supertim@pldtdsl.net

Win 'American Idol' goodies!

WERE you sad that Scott was given the boot last week? Or are you relieved for Anthony?

This week, we have four more aspiring Idols to watch. Who are you rooting for?

To add even more fun to this season's American Idols, 2bU! and Star World have been giving away exclusive "American Idol" premium items.

E-mail your answers to the following questions to americanidol_on_starworld@yahoo.com. The first five people who will send correct answers will win "American Idol" goodies.

Week of May 9

1. During Broadway Classics week, who performed a number from the "Sound of Music"?
2. Which contestant claimed to have a sack of lucky charms as a superstition?
3. Who used to work at Six Flags?
4. Where is the "American Idol Finale" held?
5. What is the name of the British show that "American Idol" was based on?

Catch "American Idol" on Star World every Wednesday at 4 p.m., 8 p.m., 11:30 p.m.; Thursdays at 11 a.m., 4 p.m., 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.; and Fridays at 2:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Winners for Week of May 2:

1. Mardy Pagsuguiron
2. Marie Torres
3. Rose Magno
4. Elvin G. Luciano
5. Kevin Robles

Winners will be notified on how they can claim their prize.

Still haven't claimed your Valentine blowout prize?

IF YOU weren't able to make it to the INQUIRER office (Chino Roces Ave. corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati) last Sunday to claim your prizes for the 2bU! Valentine Blowout, please call Ching de la Cruz at 8978808 to schedule when you want to pick them up.

Prizes must be claimed by May 31.

My summer beauty checklist

From page D4

sun-shy or a sun worshipper. Its SPF ranges from a low yet ample SPF 4 (for the best-selling Sun Spray) to a very safe SPF 50 (for the Moisturizing Sunblock Lotion for the face and body).

For the tan-phobics, it recently came out with Whitening Sunblock Cream SPF 50-plus points. The brand also carries a wonderful line of lip care you can tote on your trips. All prices are amazingly reasonable.

Godiva offers its own sun care line, Safe Sun, that doesn't just shield your skin from damaging rays, but has a special ingredient that wards off less-than-skin-friendly sea creatures like jellyfish to make sure you go about your vacation absolutely sting-free. I'd recommend it to active swimmers, water sport fanatics and kids.

Then, of course, there's the trusty Squalane After-Sun Cooling Lotion, an intense moisturizer that works well past the summer months.

Hawaiian Tropic is the classic staple in every beach-lover's skincare arsenal. Take your pick from its range of sunscreens for every SPF need, the kids' line (that even adults with sensitive skin love), and the super tan boosters (I love the Tan Amplifier even when I'm not under the sun).

Clarins is the name to trust for self-tanning products, since it has one for every need. Try the gel formulas for oily skin, lotion and milk formulas for dry, and the portable sunblock sticks for fuss-free trips to the beach.

E-mail the author at lora_gahol@yahoo.com

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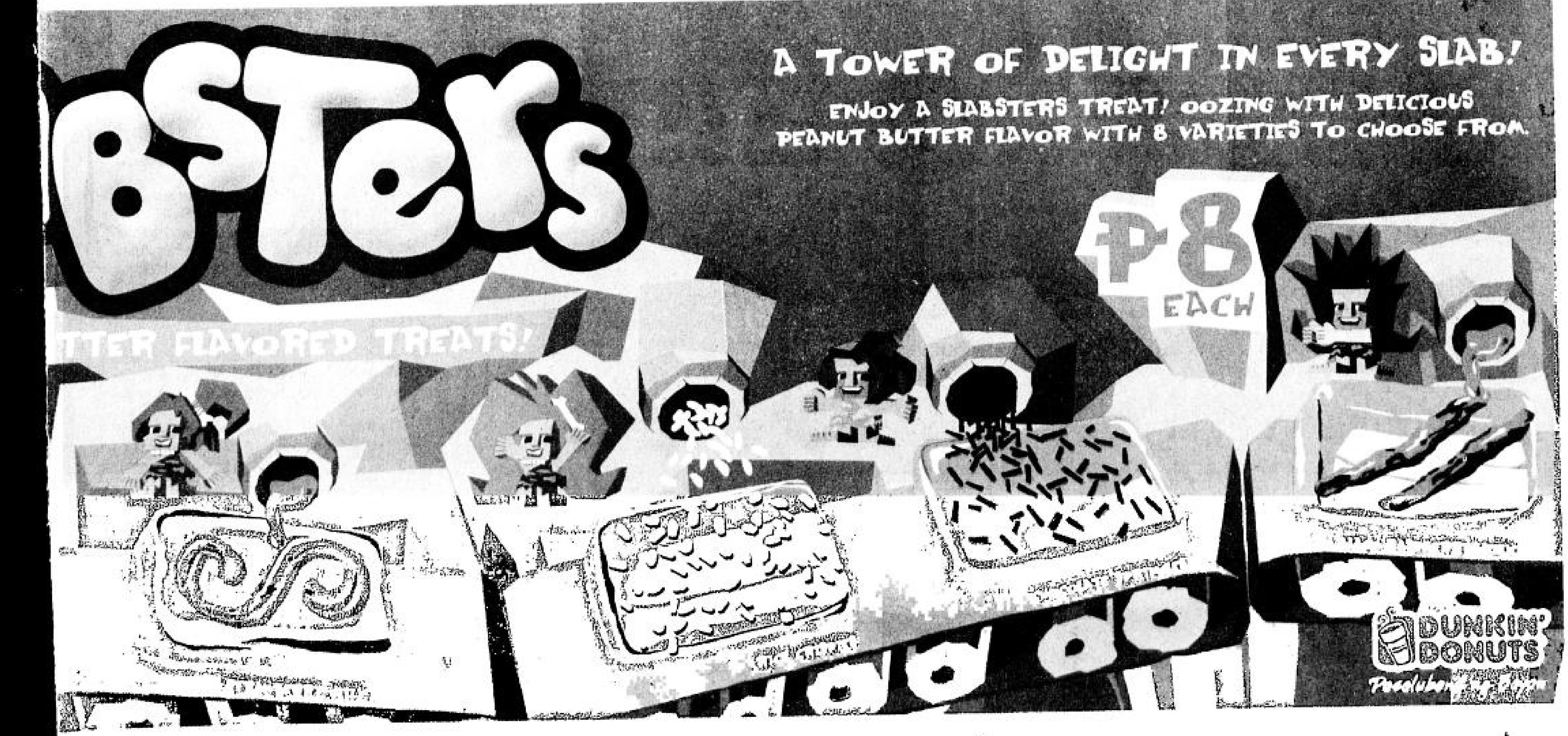

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Though relatively a new player in the credit card industry, Banco de Oro, one of the country's top universal banks, realized the importance of going into customer segmentation early. Its special relationship with SM, undoubtedly the country's largest chain of retail establishments, has made BDO the only bank to tap into the enormous market of SM shoppers, with a new card product aptly named the **BDO Shop More MasterCard.**

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More freebies!
Plus, shoppers can get a load of all these freebies that come with the **BDO Shop More MasterCard:** FREE Membership Fee for the First Year, FREE First Supplementary Card, and FREE SM Advantage Card!

More shopping pleasures!
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BDO Shop More MasterCard is accepted worldwide, and is loaded with these standard features: Free Lost Card Protection, Wide Payment Network, 24-Hour Cardholder Services, Cash Advance Facility of up to 30% of credit limit, plus the convenience of BDO's longer banking hours that extend even up to Sundays and holidays for selected branches.

Apply now! Visit the BDO Shop More sales booths inside selected SM Department Stores and Supermarkets or any Banco de Oro branch near you. **Call 631-8000 for more details.**

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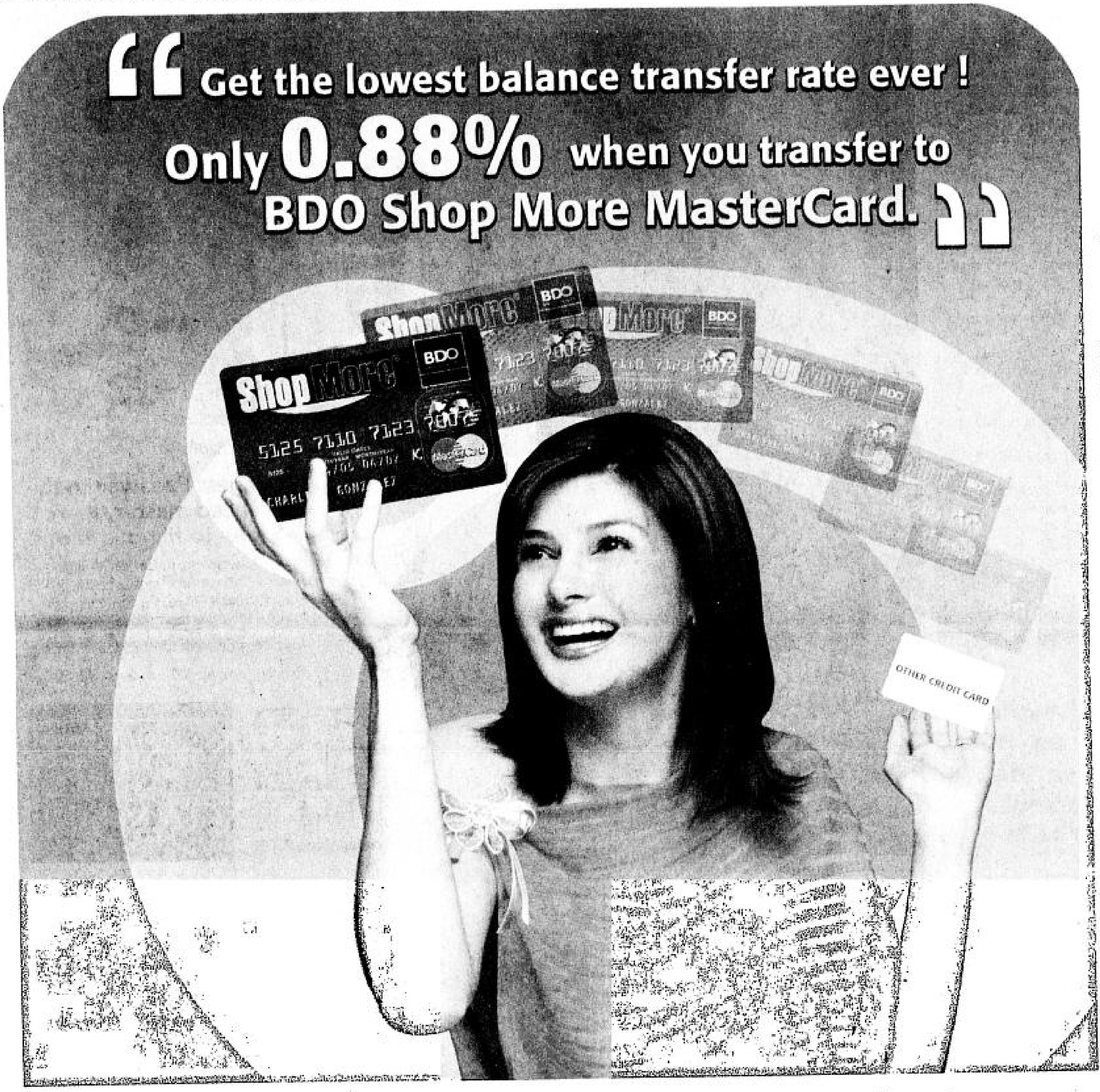
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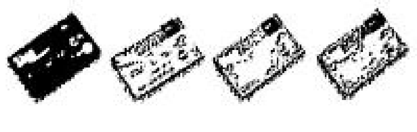

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My summer beauty checklist

THE SUDDEN rise in temperature around the months of March and April has become my cue to (temporarily) overhaul my beauty habits.

Summer means two glorious months of sun, sea and sand—and 60 or so days of being at the mercy of UV damage.

Lora Gabol

Two glorious months of sun, sea, and sand—and 60 or so days of being at the mercy of UV damage. Better be ready

A girl has to get ready for the onslaught. So, along with booking beach trips left and right, I find myself scouring store shelves for the best skincare under the sun—pun intended. Here's what I found this year:

Block beauties

As far as I can remember, I've been packing bottles and bottles of Hawaiian Tropic SPF 45 to all of my beach trips I've gone to. I love its beach-y coconut smell so much, I am known to sniff from the bottle off-beach season to remind me of beautiful memories of paradise.

But since I want to get the darkest tan I could, I'm toting the lip balm version of this classic potion for now and am off to discovering the best tanning regimen that will protect me from the dangers of the sun as well.

I went on a road trip a la "The Simple Life" with my good friend Camille to the nearby shores of Nasugbu last Holy Week. We knew that two chicks + the beach = tons of sun care products, so we packed bottles and bottles of sunscreen and tan boosters to make sure we would be heading back to the city with at least half of Paris Hilton's tan.

What worked for me? I sprayed on Nivea Sun Spray SPF 30 on my still-white body and slathered on Shiseido Moisturizing Waterproof Sun Block SPF 38 for the face on my notoriously burn-prone cheeks before baking under the Batangas sun.

Being on the dusky side (and having already gotten a tan from a previous Boracay holiday), Camille could afford to rely on the lower SPF of Nivea Sun Oil SPF 4 on her body and Shu Uemura Total Defender SPF 25 on her face.

As a tanning oil, I used Home Spa's Extra Virgin·Coconut Massage Oil over my 'screen, trying to duplicate the fabulous Bora tan I achieved last year with the help of the sidewalk variety you can purchase from the *manangs* on the island.

Needless to say, we both got beautifully golden results.

Mane attraction

My freshly-chopped 'do deserved the best care, so I made sure I brought along my trusty Kérastase Soleil Voile Protecteur, a deliciously-smelling protective oil spray that coats each and every strand of your hair and protects it from sun damage.

Camille's lush locks were given a hot-oil treat with Home Spa Extra Virgin Coco Oil and Honey Hair Therapy, an intense treatment that worked even better under the scorching rays of the sun (the heat naturally released its natural silkening powers).

After an ample amount of sand and saltwater on our strands, we washed the evidence off with Sunsilk's limited-edition refreshing shampoo with watermelon extracts. Yummy!

After-sun special

To soothe the preliminary redness sun exposure lends to my skin, I generously rubbed on Phytomer Apres-Soleil Soothing Milk, the most luxurious after-sun treat (take my word for it).

The best part? You can use it as an after-sun recovery leave-in conditioner for your hair as well. Camille, being the sun goddess that she is, opted for Lancôme Cool Comfort, a relaxing, cooling concoction that does not only reverse the drying effects of sun exposure, but boosts your Brazilian babe goodness as a light self-tanner.

A genius spin-off of everyone's fave Flash Bronzer, it really does make your skin look more golden than the average under-the-sun tan.

Worth a shot

Nivea has a very competitive sun care line that has everything you need, whether you're

MY SUMMER/ D2

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Independently Pinay

Text and photos by Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondent

SHE sings. She plays her own instruments. She writes her own songs. She produces albums (all 7 of her albums were independently done). She runs her own record company. She has shared the stage with David Bowie and Rob Zombie. She joins the ranks of Canada's best artists—Alanis Morrissette, Avril Lavigne, Jann Arden and Nelly Furtado.

You're probably thinking she's just like any other foreign artist touring this side of the world. Not.

Emm Gryner is proudly Pinay. Well, proudly half-Pinay to be exact.

Born to a Canadian dad and a Filipina mom, Emm became part of a growing community of Asian Americans. While she did long to explore her roots, she has only been to the Philippines twice, the first time when she was 8 and the next time when she was 17. On her third time in the country, she vows to drink in the Filipino spirit and incorporate them in her future albums.

Having been nominated three times for the Juno Awards a.k.a. Canadian Grammys, Emm and her own label, Dead Daisy, are fast becoming the Philippines' biggest contributions to the Canadian music scene.

2bU! was given the chance to sit down with Emm to talk about everything Filipino—and Canadian.

What do you think is something you uniquely Filipino in you?

Oh wow... I don't know what to say. (Laughs) It must the fact that I love showering people with gifts. I think my mom does that as well and I don't know if this is a Filipino thing. But everywhere I go, whenever I meet Filipinos, they're just so generous. I'd like to think I'm somewhat like that. In fact, that's what I love about Filipino—and the food. (Smiles)

What Filipino food do you love?

There are just so many different types of food. It's not like any other Asian food. The fact that you can't get it all the time in Canada or in the US makes it even more special. It's not like you can get burned out on our food, like with others. Plus, it's really special.

How about Filipino music? What do you think of it? We Filipinos love to sing whether we can or not. Have you ever been to a karaoke bar?

(Laughs) Yeah, but I've never been to one.

In a regular neighborhood, we probably have one in every street corner.

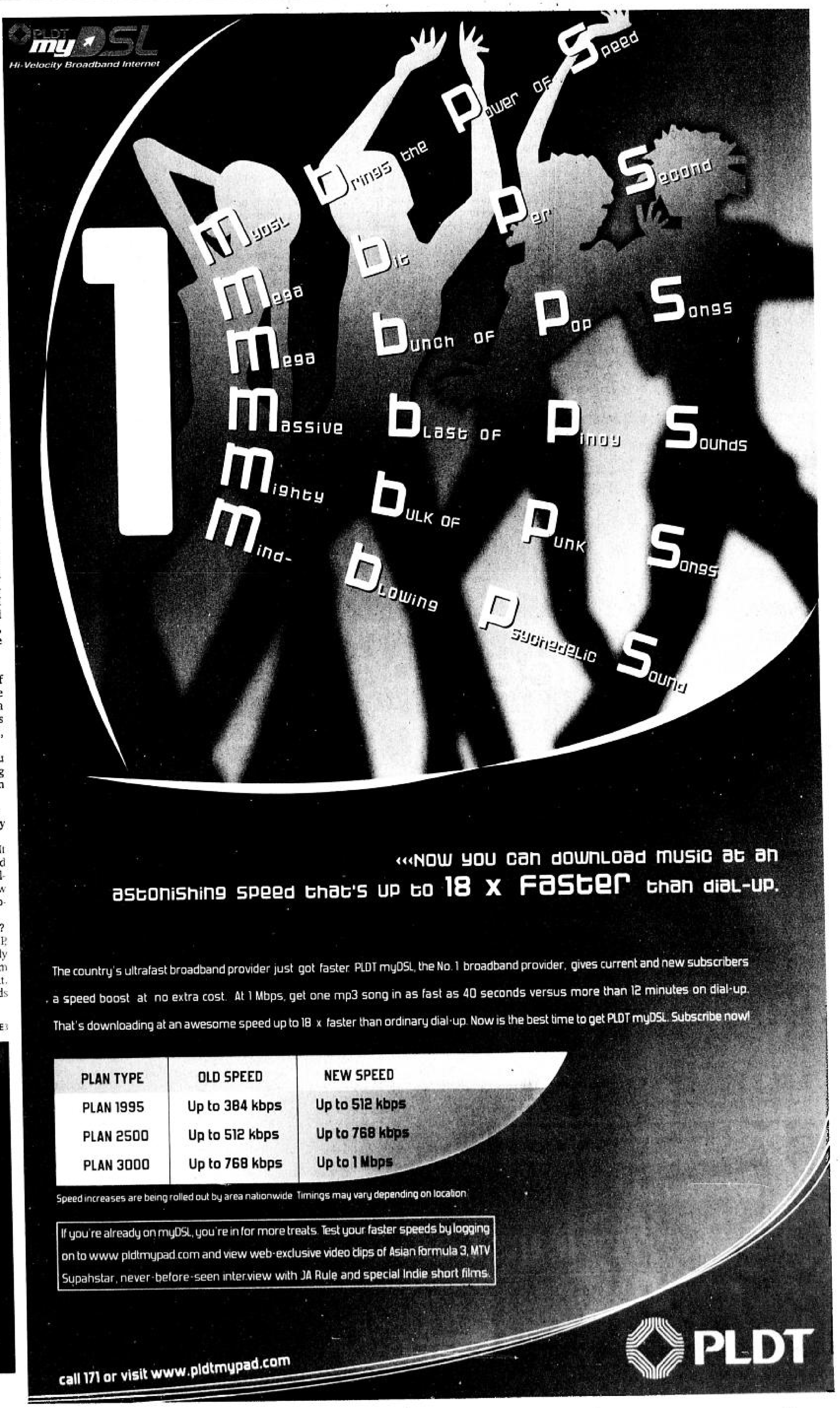
Really? I better check that out. (Laughs) It seems like there's just so much emotion and soul in Filipino music. I think, in general, Filipino music comes from the heart. You know that it's really genuine. I like that. That's probably why we love to sing so much.

Any band or artist you like in particular?

Um, yeah. I like pretty much early MYMP, but the oldies stuff is kinda cool especially when I see them on TV, and Menaya, who I'm touring with. I got to see them a little bit. They're pretty cool. Do you have any bands that you can recommend I can check out?

INDEPENDENTLY/ E3

"THERE'S so much emotion and soul in Filipino music."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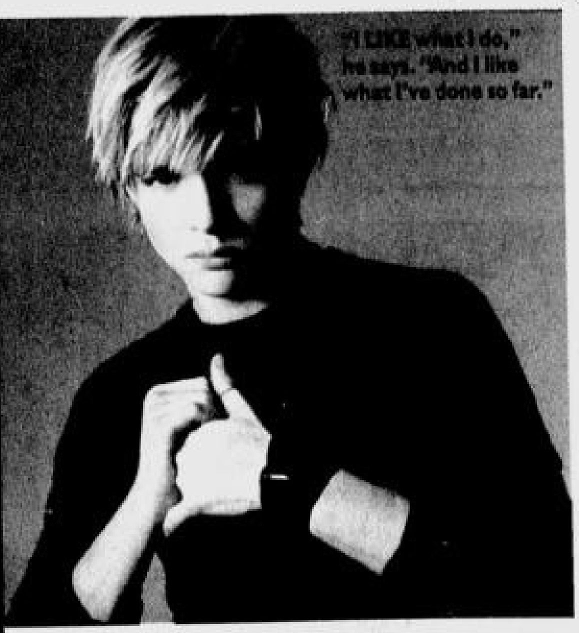
"I LIKE what I do," he says. "And I like what I've done so far."

Beautiful boy

2bU! catches up via phone patch with 17-year-old music hottie Jesse McCartney

HE started at 7 and hasn't stopped since.

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN I first saw Jesse McCartney's video for "Beautiful Soul," I mistook him for Aaron Carter and instantly felt happy for the Carter clan. But when his name flashed on the screen, I got intrigued. Who was this beautiful boy with a beautiful voice and a beautiful song?

Seventeen-year-old Jesse McCartney is the latest lad responsible for high magazine and record sales, soaring TV ratings, countless mouseclicks and high-pitched giggles among girls in the US and the rest of the world.

He began singing at age 7 on stage, later joined the New York City-based kiddie group Sugar Beats, and then went on to earn a platinum album at age 14 as a member of Dream Street, whose self-titled album reached No. 1 on Billboard's Top Independent Album Chart.

When Jesse went solo and signed up with Hollywood/Buena Vista Records in late 2003, he became even more popular. His songs were included in the TV and movie soundtracks for "A Cinderella Story," "The Princess Diaries 2," "Stuck in the Suburbs," "Ella Enchanted" and "That's So Raven."

Debut album

In his debut solo album, "Beautiful Soul," Jesse co-wrote four tracks and singles.

"She's No You," the current single, is a favorite co-written song. "It's a fun and rhythmic track," he says.

But overall, it is "The Stupid Things" that he considers his favorite track because he finds it the most enjoyable number to perform.

When asked about singers he looks up to, Jesse answers, "I never have an easy time deciding who my favorite singers or main influences are. There are too many."

Still, he admits there are certain artists whose sounds and styles are heard on his album: "Craig David, Daniel Bedingfield, Justin Timberlake and Usher," he rattles off.

He wants to collaborate with Justin and Usher, and dreams of a duet with the equally young Jojo, whom he applauds for her "spectacular voice."

Christina Aguilera is also included in his list of dream artists, and not just because of her voice. "She's my crush," he reveals.

Old soul

Signs of an old soul are pretty much evident in Jesse's words. For example, he names Meryl Streep and Robert De Niro as his favorite actors, loves Marcia Cross of "Desperate Housewives" (and actually knows that Cross was fabulous in "Melrose Place"), and goes for Very Sexy from Victoria's Secret.

If those are not enough, consider how his favorite musical instrument separates him from your usual teenage musician.

"Call me a nerd, but I really love playing the alto saxophone," he says. "I find it really sexy."

Jesse loves hanging out with older people, credits family and friends for "keeping me sane and bringing me down," and knows the importance of contentment, gratitude and living a life without regrets.

But he remains, in many ways, a growing boy. He is addicted to his Xbox and can't live without gadgets and gizmos. He can't stop raving about his new digital camera. He's proud that "Drop It Like It's Hot" is his current ring tone. He loves tiramisu and doesn't care that too much of it can possibly ruin his voice.

Is he unattached? "No, not anymore," he reveals. His girlfriend is a "a phenomenal actress," but he doesn't give away the name of the lucky girl. But she describes her as "laid-back, low-maintenance, fun to be with, confident, someone who can make me laugh."

So what's in store for a beautiful young talent like Jesse McCartney? More beautiful things, definitely. And he's only too happy about it.

"I like what I do," he says. "And I like what I've done so far."

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

THE BOYS aboar
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vehicle challenge

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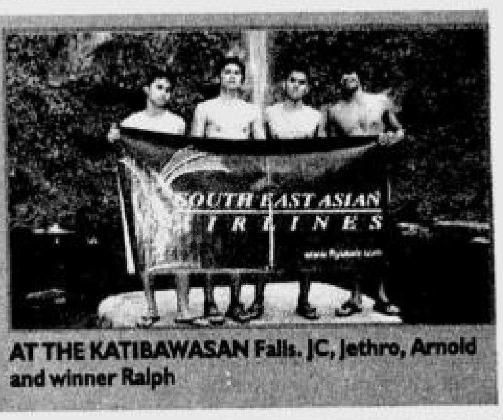
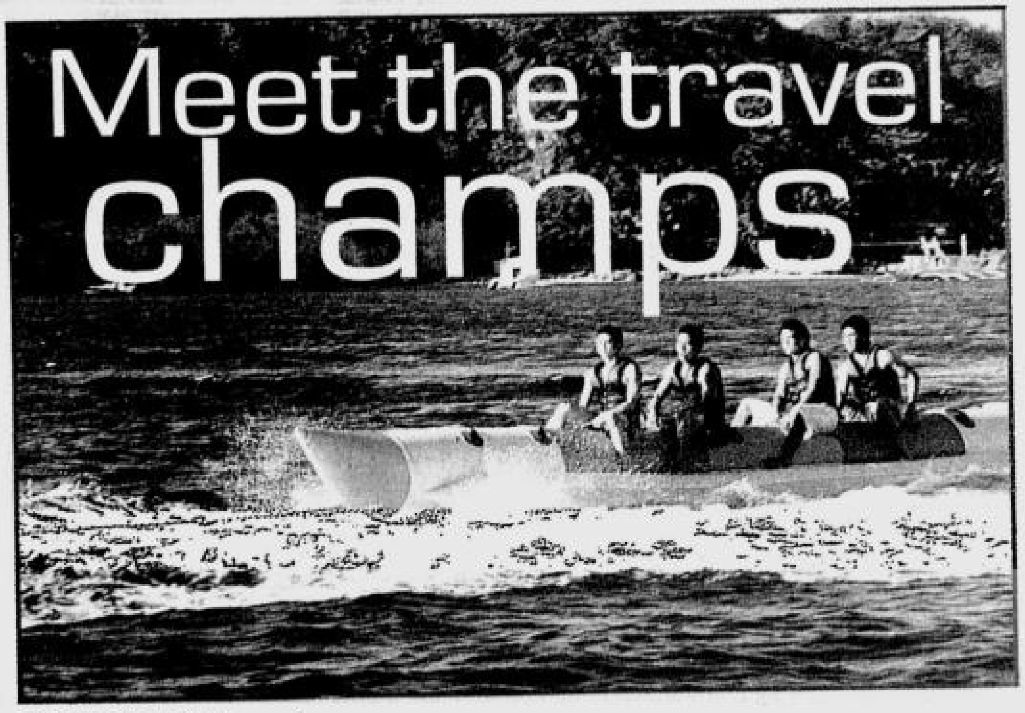


AT THE KATIBAWASAN Falls. JC, Jethro, Arnold and winner Ralph

Meet the travel champs

Seven individuals faced challenges of all kinds on a seven-day race around the Philippines



BANANA boat action

By Pam Pastor

FOR SEVEN days, seven individuals flew from city to city and faced challenge after challenge for the first South East Asian Airlines Adventure Race, which they christened "Buong 'Pinas in Seven Days."

On the last day, the four boys and three girls met again in Boracay and did their best at golf, watersports and all-terrain vehicle competitions.

That night, during a celebratory dinner at Boracay Terraces Resort, two winners were declared by Seair chair and co-founder Capt. Iren Dornier—22-year-old Jerizza Jayne Carrillo of Assumption College and 21-year-old Raphael Kiefer from Ateneo de Cagayan.

Over dinner, the winners and the other competitors—Jethro S. Alberto (18) and JC Barbasa (20) from De La Salle University, Arnold Galang (21) from the University of Santo Tomas, LC Genesis So (19) from Chiang Kai Shek College and Ma. Patricia Alexandra V. Limjoco (20) from College of St. Benilde—talked about their favorite places, unforgettable moments and toughest challenges in the race.

CLUB NOAH
Isabelle

THE GIRLS at Club Noah. (From left) Jerri, LC and Penny

Which was your favorite challenge?

Jerri: Today's challenges. At Fairways we had to shoot the golf ball into the hole using our noses. Also the jet ski ride, banana boat ride and the all-terrain vehicle challenge.

Raphael: Watersports. Because there are so many skills you have to use and because I got to parasail. It was bliss.

Arnold: Boxing at Red Corner at the Waterfront Cebu.

LC: The drawing challenge at El Nido. We had to draw our adventure.

JC: Archery in Plantation Bay. I didn't know I knew how to use a bow and arrow. I hit the bullseye and won that challenge.

Penny: The second to the last one. We had to jump from a banana boat and then jet ski. The prize was the chance to parasail. It was my first time to parasail and it was during sunset.

What was the most difficult challenge for you?

Jerri: The two-hour kayak and the relay we had to do in Club Noah. My slipper broke, we had to eat *bayawak* and drink... was that crocodile phlegm? Then we had to look for a stairway with 109 steps... I felt I was gonna lose.

Raphael: Putting a golf ball with your nose.

Which place did you love the most?

Jerri: Miniloc, El Nido.

Raphael: Camiguin. It's so quiet, laidback and there is so much to see. The people are so warm.

Arnold: Plantation Bay in Cebu.

LC: El Nido, Palawan.

JC: Camiguin. It was so quiet. And the Katibawasan Falls in Davao.

Penny: Club Noah. The people are very accommodating. The food was good, the place is very beautiful and the environment there is so pristine.

The seven-day race proved to be more than just that. The seven competitors made the most out of it, exploring some of our country's hottest destinations and getting to know themselves better in the process.

The race is over, the winners have been declared, but there is no doubt the contestants have enough memories to last them a lifetime.

The Seair Adventure Pass (worth P16,500), which will be available until May 30, entitles the bearer to an unlimited number of domestic flights on any regular Seair route for 45 days. Destinations include Camiguin, Caticlan (Boracay), Clark, Cotabato, Busuanga, Cuyo, El Nido, Puerto Princesa, Taytay (Palawan), San Jose (Occidental Mindoro), Siargao, Zamboanga, Jolo and Tawi-Tawi.

For inquiries about Seair's Adventure Pass, visit www.flyseair.com or call 8437308.

We have winners!

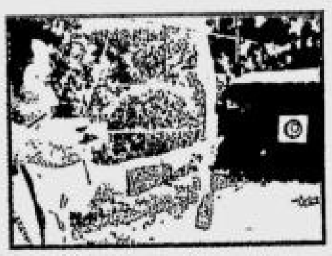
IN THE MIDDLE of the Seair Adventure Race, we asked you to look into your crystal balls and predict who will win.

You clogged our inbox with your guesses, including one guy who sent over three hundred e-mails. Now, the winners have been chosen.

Congratulations, Marc Garcia of Lyceum. You've won a six-month membership at Red Corner.

Congratulations, too, Lornadhal Campilan of Sykes Asia Inc. You won a Seair Adventure Pass. Start packing your bags!

Winners may claim their prizes at the Seair Makati Office, 2/F Dona Concepcion Building, 1020 Arnaiz Ave. Makati. Don't forget to bring a valid ID.



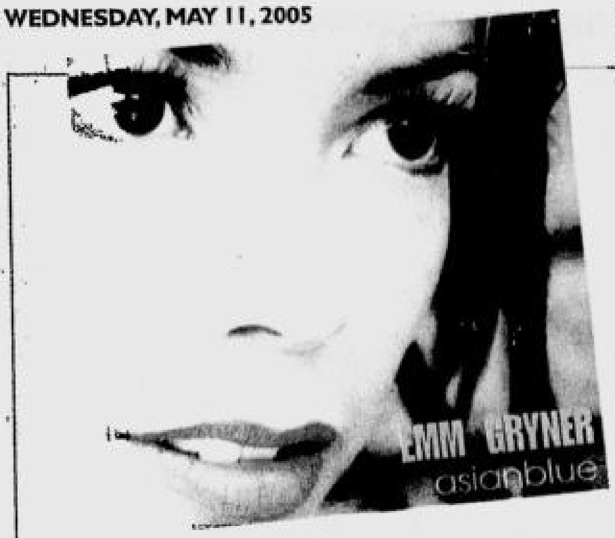
ARNOLD gives archery a shot.

PENNY, LC and winner Jerri during the ATV challenge

ARNOLD gives Jethro a punch.

THE GIRLS at Fairways in Boracay

SPLASH. The watersports challenge



EMM GRYNER'S 'ASIANBLUE'

Time, love and tenderness

By Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondent

EMM Gryner comes back home with "Asianblue," an 11-track album showcasing her unique Fil-Canadian vibe. Prepare to drown yourself in a sea of foot-tapping, finger-drumming tunes and easy-listening music.

Gryner's vocals entice you to listen more and take in her music. And when you're done listening to her, the melodies will start playing your head. Before you know it, you're addicted.

That's what happened to me. I got hooked. I am now officially an Emm junkie.

The first four tracks of Gryner's album—"Symphonic," "Beautiful Things," "Northern Holiday" and "Free"—are great for driving around town, especially when you get stuck in traffic. Her melodies will blow off that steam coming out from your ears and will transport you to a happy place. See? Told you I'm already a junkie.

The rest of the tracks are more on the easy-listening side. Think Sheryl Crow meets Jann Arden. Light and easy, these songs will make you feel calm and collected.

The track I like best is "Beautiful Things." It talks about the many changes in life and the beautiful things that will always remain, with a melody that will make you want to sing along.

I also like "Young Rebel." Gryner's voice is truly intoxicating on this one, and I can't help but bob my head to it.

Yes, this album is a must-buy. Listening to Gryner makes you proud that she's Filipino, too.

Independently Pinay

From page E1

Wow, wasn't expecting that. Well, Rivermaya and Bamboo are the biggest bands right now. There's also Eraserheads, but they disbanded already.

Yeah. I've heard about them. I'll make sure I check them out.

How was it like when you were here at 8 years old, 17 and now?

The last time I was here, when I was 17, we came with the family. I was with my dad who is Canadian and my brothers and my mom and I. My dad just couldn't handle it. He couldn't handle the heat. It's funny because I thought it was actually really beautiful here. I mean, December is not really that hot, is it?

It's actually the coldest month in the Philippines.

Yeah. (Laughs) That's a little bizarre. Imagine if he were here now. He'd be a little white ball.

Are there things you hate about Filipinos?

There's nothing that I hate about Filipinos. I really don't understand how anyone can hate such loving people. Filipinos are such great people.

Are there a lot of Filipinos in Canada?

A lot. There are a lot of Filipinos in Toronto. There's a Filipino family we usually spend Christmas with and some other holidays. It's with them that we get to experience Filipino food and other Filipino things.

That's good. Did you know a lot of Filipinos are going to Canada to be nurses and caregivers?

My mom's an RN (registered nurse). But she came to Canada in 1964.

JUST for 2bU!

It's recent phenomenon, really. More and more Filipinos are going out of the country to try their luck and earn money.

Really? I didn't know that. But they plan to come back?

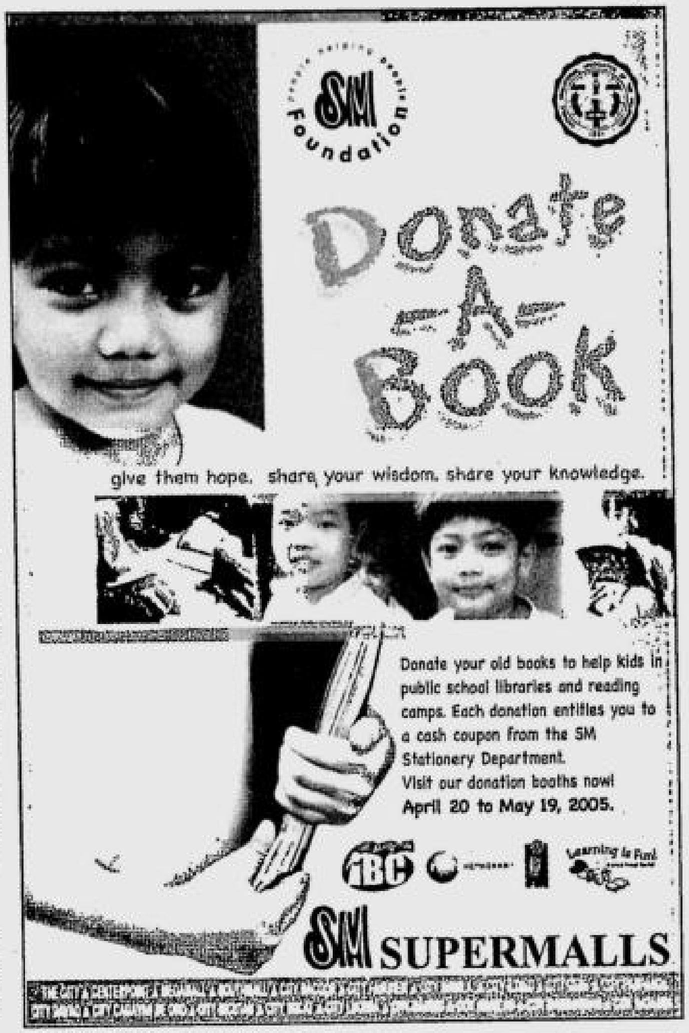
Yes, after they earn enough.

I think they'll always come back. I was born and raised in Canada but I'm here exploring my roots. It is but normal to try new things, but then you'll always come back to where you started. That's also why I'm here. I want to learn more about my Filipino heritage and maybe incorporate that into my music. What's the use of being Filipino and Canadian at the same time if you can't put the two worlds together, right?

Catch Emm and Menaya on May 11, 5 p.m., at Music One Greenbelt; May 13 at The Village Courtyard, Cebu City; May 14 at Club North Bacolod City; and May 15 at Juice, Plazoleta, Boracay.

Emm Gryner's Philippine Homecoming Tour is presented by Fudge Magazine, Smart 286 and Skechers. It is supported by Levi's, Richmond Hotel, Asian Spirit, MYX, Escondido, Serendipity Boracay and Woof! Productions.

To get to know more about Emm and her music, visit www.emmgryner.com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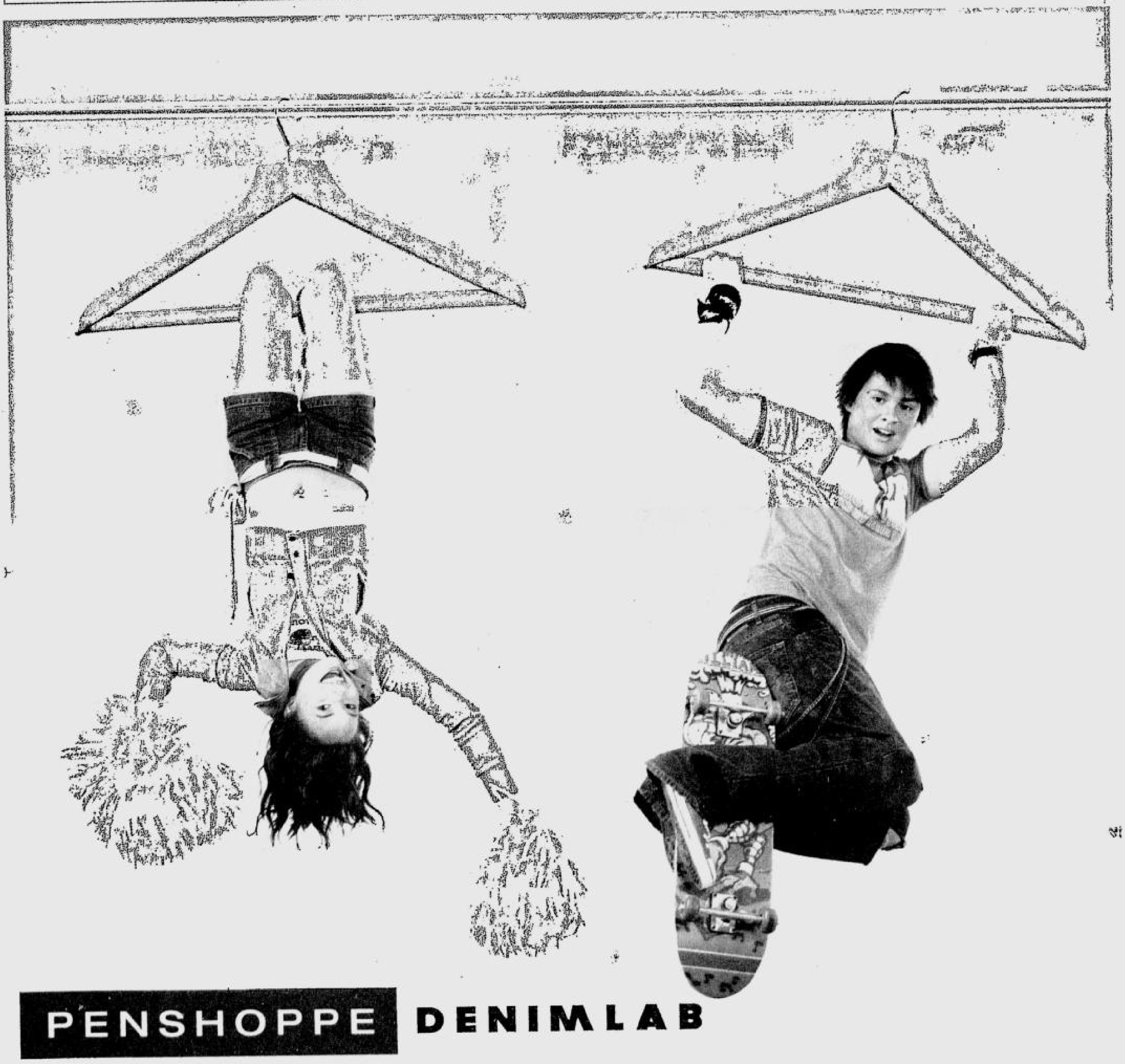
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SAMURAI SPIDERS
In Japan, spiders do not fight to their death, but the excitement of the match is still high, nevertheless.

INDIAN WITCH HUNT
In the tribal belts of India, ailments and sicknesses are blamed on women accused of witchcraft.

HISS OF DEATH
King Cobras in this village are so revered that when a snake dies, a three-day mourning is in order.

Faces of Asia in new documentaries

By Harold Lim
Contributor

IN THAILAND, an 8-year old boy is fighting off snakes to earn himself and his family a living. In India, a teenage boy beheaded his aunt and carried her head to the police, believing that she was a witch. In China, a war is brewing—between invading gerbils and a massive air force of golden eagles.

Such diverse worlds are featured in National Geographic Channel's (NGC) new season of ShowReal Asia, a collection of the latest works by Asia's premier documentary filmmakers. The second season captures bold new stories, peoples and subcultures that make up the heart of Asia—some familiar themes, others unheard of.

From the booming cosmetic surgery industry in China to a Japanese village's fervor over fighting spiders, viewers get a modern perspective on Asia, perhaps creating and shattering myths in the process.

This season's batch of films feature 10 talented directors from China, India, Japan, Singapore and Thailand selected to receive a sizeable grant to produce a 60-minute all-Asia documentary with a wide international appeal. The project is a collaboration between NGC and the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB).

Bryan Smith, executive vice president of production, National Geographic Channels International, says: "ShowReal Asia is the only unique opportunity in Asia, where Asia

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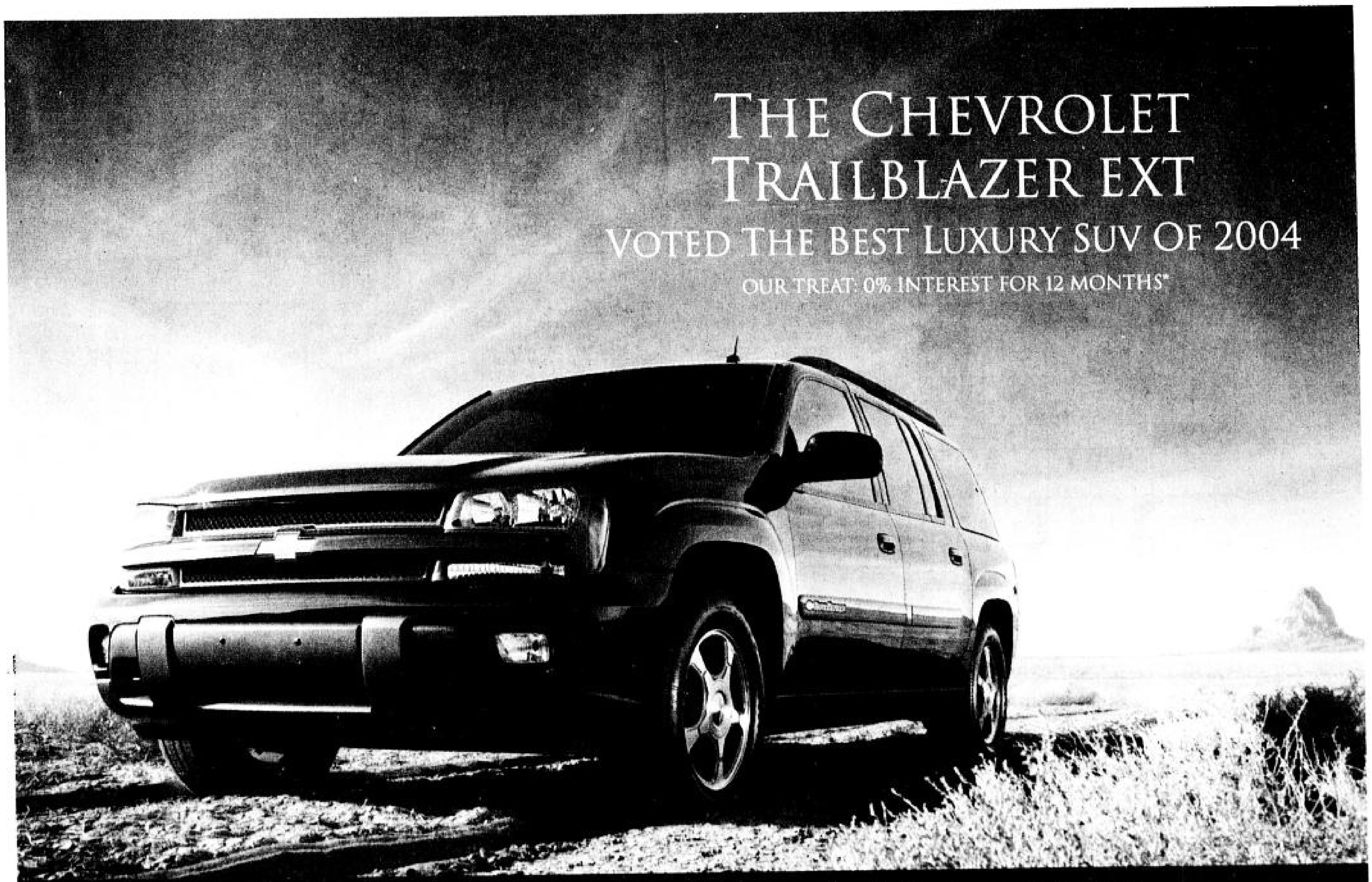
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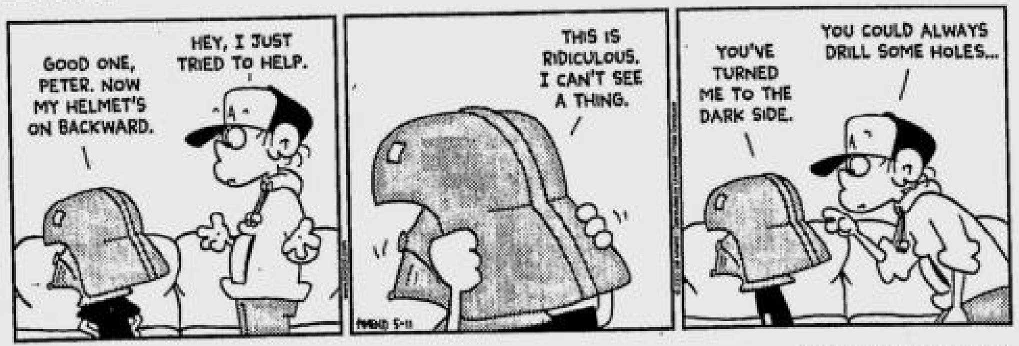
I am CHEVROLET

*Based on 50% down payment. Straight discounts apply for cash buyers. PROMO PERIOD: March 4 to March 31, 2005. EXTENDED UNTIL MAY 31, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1237 Series of 2005

GM Autoworld MAKATI 867.8163 to 87 / 894.1976 • GM Autoworld QUEZON AVE 374.1250 to 59 • GM Autoworld SHAW 535.4944 / 533.8375 / 533.1263 / 533.6349 • Chevrolet PASIG 672.1612 to 14 / 672.1485 • Chevrolet ALABANG 771.1206 to 09
Chevrolet NORTH EDSA 374.9992 to 97 / 374.9963 • Chevrolet PAMPANGA (045) 963.3333 / (045) 860.2000 • GM Autoworld CEBU (032) 234.0426 to 29 • Chevrolet DAVAO (082) 300.7777 / (082) 235.3811 • Chevrolet CAGAYAN DE ORO (08822) 722.999 / (088) 857.9999

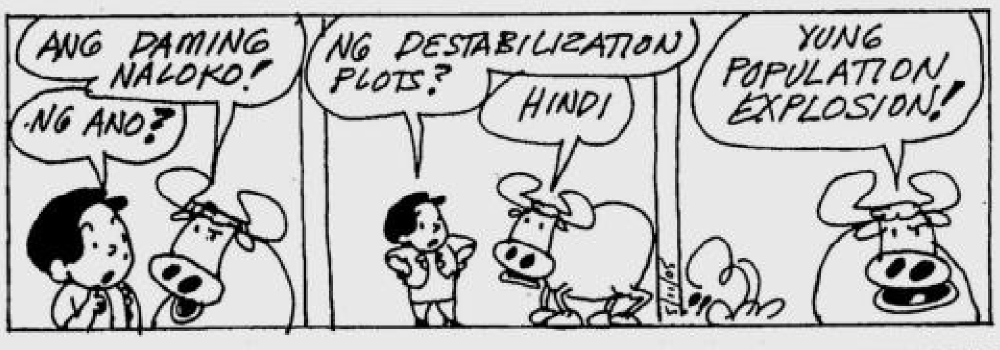
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


GOOD ONE, PETER. NOW MY HELMET'S ON BACKWARD.
HEY, I JUST TRIED TO HELP.
THIS IS RIDICULOUS. I CAN'T SEE A THING.
YOU'VE TURNED ME TO THE DARK SIDE.
YOU COULD ALWAYS DRILL SOME HOLES...
AMEND 5-11

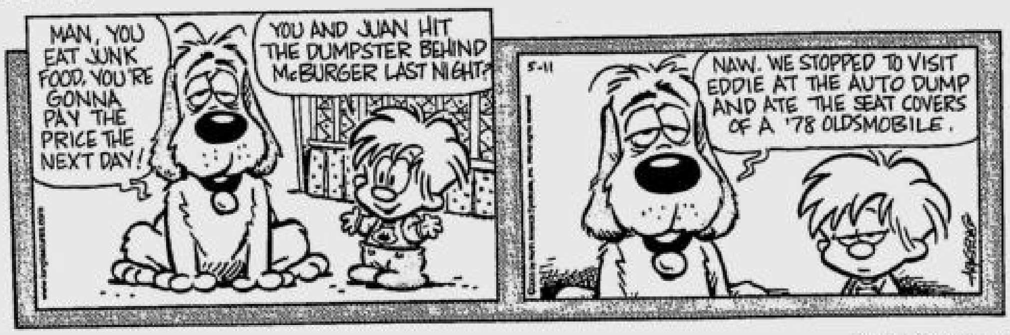
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG DAMING NALOKO!
NG ANO?
NG DESTABILIZATION PLOTS?
HINDI
YUNG POPULATION EXPLOSION!

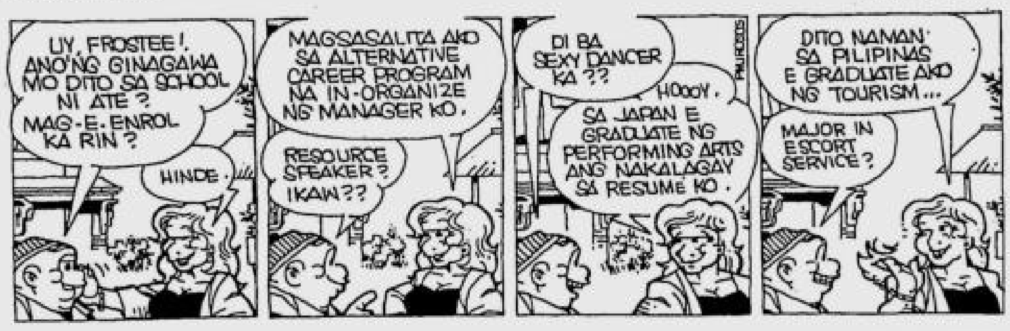
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MAN, YOU EAT JUNK FOOD, YOU'RE GONNA PAY THE PRICE THE NEXT DAY!
YOU AND JUAN HIT THE DUMPSTER BEHIND McBURGER LAST NIGHT?
5-11
NAW. WE STOPPED TO VISIT EDDIE AT THE AUTO DUMP AND ATE THE SEAT COVERS OF A '78 OLDSMOBILE.

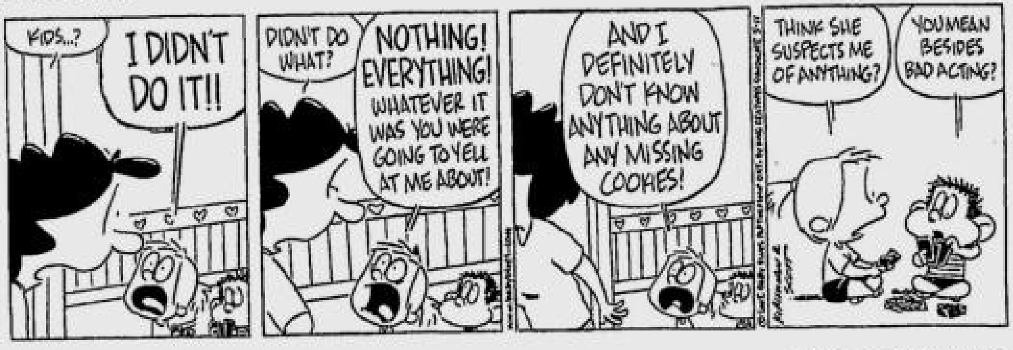
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


UY, FROSTEE!. ANO'NG GINAGAWA MO DITO SA SCHOOL NI ATE? MAG-E-ENROL KA RIN?
HINDE.
MAGSASALITA AKO SA ALTERNATIVE CAREER PROGRAM NA IN-ORGANIZE NG MANAGER KO.
RESOURCE SPEAKER? IKAW??
DI BA SEXY DANCER KA??
HOOOY.
SA JAPAN E GRADUATE NG PERFORMING ARTS ANG NAKALAGAY SA RESUME KO.
DITO NAMAN SA PILIPINAS E GRADUATE AKO NG TOURISM...
MAJOR IN ESCORT SERVICE?

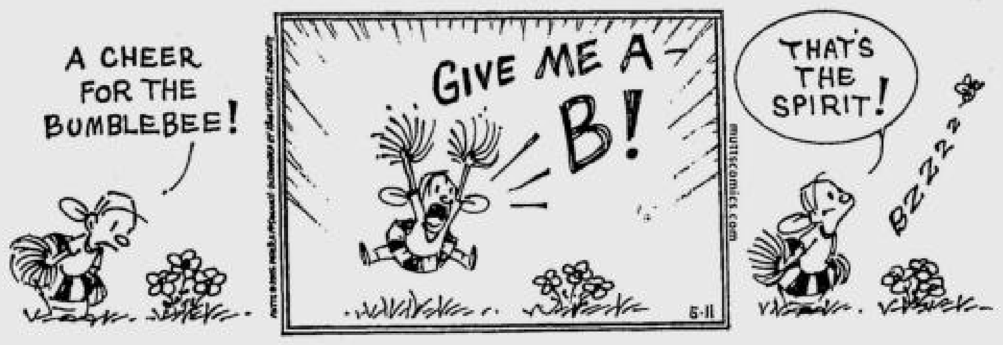
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


KIDS...?
I DIDN'T DO IT!!
DIDN'T DO WHAT?
NOTHING! EVERYTHING! WHATEVER IT WAS YOU WERE GOING TO YELL AT ME ABOUT!
AND I DEFINITELY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ANY MISSING COOKIES!
THINK SHE SUSPECTS ME OF ANYTHING?
YOU MEAN BESIDES BAD ACTING?

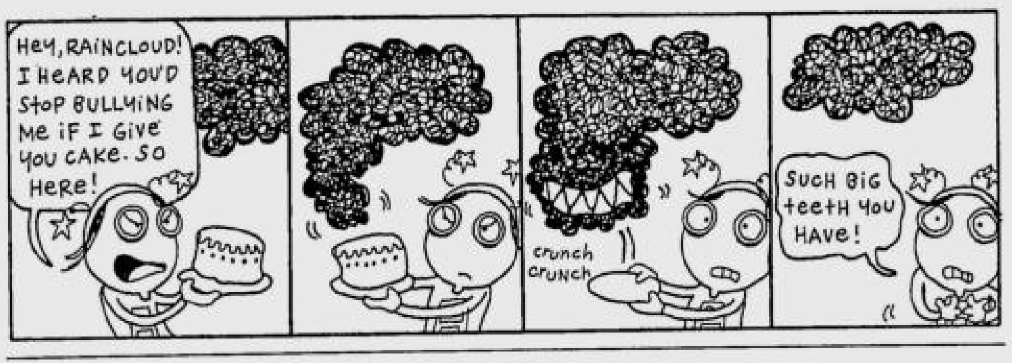
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


A CHEER FOR THE BUMBLEBEE!
GIVE ME A B!
5-11
THAT'S THE SPIRIT!
BZZZZ
muttscomics.com

ATOMO AND WEBOY

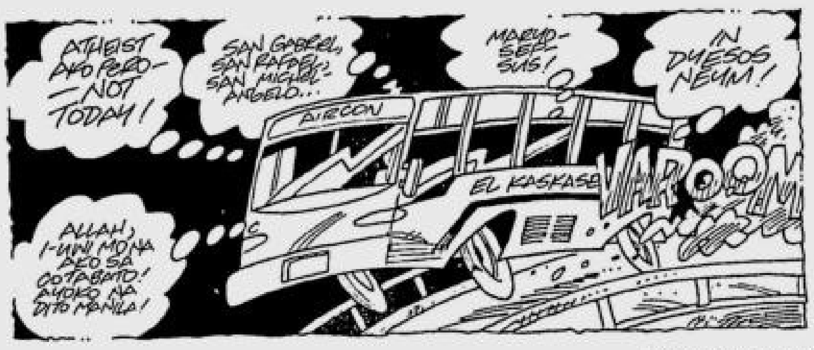
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, RAINCLOUD! I HEARD YOU'D STOP BULLYING ME IF I GIVE YOU CAKE. SO HERE!
crunch crunch
SUCH BIG teeth YOU HAVE!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ANG MGA PINAKA-RELIHIYOSONG PILIPINO AY MATATAGPUAN MO SA LOOB NG MGA HUMAHARUROT NA BUS SA MAYNILA


ATHEIST AKO PERO —NOT TODAY!
SAN GABRIEL, SAN RAFAEL, SAN MIGUEL ANGELO...
MARYOSEP-SUS!
IN DYESOS NEUM!
AIRCON
EL KASKASE
VAROOM
ALLAH, I-UWI MO NA AKO SA COTABATO! AYOKO NA DITO MANILA!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly imaginative and creative. You also have a lot of whimsy; you have your own way of seeing things. Some of you are considered eccentric. People who don't understand you patronize you; ignore this. Your dreams and imagination are beyond what most people can fathom. The year ahead brings exciting change to you. Birthdate of: Natasha Richardson, actress; Salvador Dali, artist; Irving Berlin, composer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's important to remember to trust partnerships this year. Partnerships and close friends benefit you now. (This is not a time to go it alone.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Have faith that you can improve your job this year. Either your nasty boss will move on or you will get a new job or new duties. Something definitely improves!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Plan to take a vacation this year. Once every 12 years, each of us gets a great opportunity to do this—this year, it's your turn. Have fun!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a wonderful year for real estate for you. Not only can you improve your real estate situation, you can also improve your family relationships. (Pass the cookies, please.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You feel so positive about life this year that your ability to communicate to others is excellent! In part, this is because a positive attitude always attracts people to you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is your year to improve your earnings. Count on it. Somehow you will either get a better-paying job, or if you're unemployed, you'll find work.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Once every 12 years Jupiter is in your sign. It stays there for about a year. Lucky you—Jupiter is in your sign now! Make the most of this by going after whatever you want.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): At this stage in your life, it's important to know that it is a time of preparation. You are approaching a time of great achievement—perhaps graduation or a promotion, something that makes you proud.

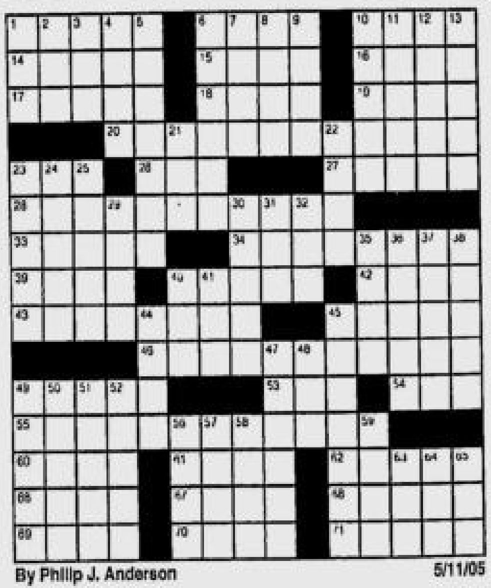
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're so popular now! It is most appropriate to respond to all these invitations. Lend your time and effort to groups, clubs, organizations and friends.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your career never looked better! This is the year you attract all kinds of favorable opportunities and powerful people to you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Lovely opportunities connected to publishing, the media, foreign countries, travel and any kind of advanced education are yours for the asking this year. (Pack those bags.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You are definitely on the receiving end of goodies now. Your partner can earn more. You might get an inheritance. Somehow the universe wants to offer you a gift.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

5/11/05

ACROSS
1 Riding whip
6 Cain's victim
10 Rubberneck
14 Academy Award
15 Medication unit
16 State firmly
17 Reagan cabinet member
18 Beach mound
19 Bandleader Puente
20 Incongruous product?
23 Archaic: abbr.
26 NY school
27 Palmer of golf
28 Incongruous product?
33 Henning and McClure
34 Statue's base
39 & others
40 Rectify
42 Patriotic Nathan
43 Car cooler
45 Beauty parlor
46 Incongruous product?
49 Highland hillsides
53 Alias letters
54 Gridiron org.
55 Incongruous product?
60 Take apart
61 Humorist Bombeck
62 Lessing or Day
66 Person, place or thing
67 Security cash
68 Bikini, for one
69 Sole
70 Qualified
71 Menial

DOWN
1 Shiite pilgrimage destination
2 Employment
3 Rink material
4 Hoarse sound
5 Vine support
6 Makes sense
7 Boxing match
8 Feudal serf
9 Salacious look
10 Florida student
11 Of birds
12 Man who is a dish?
13 Wear away
21 Help out
22 Exposed
23 More aged
24 Flora and fauna of a region
25 Athletic team
29 Citrus hybrid
30 Mimickers
31 Writing implement
32 Byrnes or Roush
35 Bandleader Artie
36 Raptor's weapon
37 Haughty
38 Ivan of tennis
40 NL Braves
41 Extinct ostrichlike bird
44 Polygonal projection
45 Public disgrace
47 Mexican dish
48 ETO leader
49 Actor Kirby
50 Talk and talk
51 "Rush, Rush" singer
52 Jet black
56 Singer McEntire
57 Ten-legged crustacean
58 Runner Zatopek
59 Dorothy's dog
63 Horizontal lineup
64 Wisc. neighbor
65 Not forthright

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

C	I	V	E	T	■	A	L	E	C	■	B	O	L	A
U	N	I	T	E	■	C	O	L	A	■	A	R	O	D
E	N	O	C	H	■	I	R	O	N	■	R	E	E	L
D	S	L	■	R	I	D	D	I	C	K	B	O	W	E
■	■	I	M	A	M	S	■	■	E	R	A	S	E	R
B	A	N	A	N	A	■	P	O	L	A	R	■	■	■
E	L	B	E	■	G	R	I	N	■	F	A	B	L	E
A	D	O	■	B	O	U	Q	U	E	T	■	O	A	K
D	O	W	E	L	■	B	U	S	Y	■	A	D	U	E
■	■	■	P	U	L	S	F	■	D	A	V	I	D	S
A	N	K	A	R	A	■	■	A	I	M	E	D	■	■
B	E	A	U	B	R	I	D	G	E	S	■	D	M	V
C	U	R	L	■	E	R	I	N	■	T	A	L	I	A
T	R	E	E	■	D	A	M	L	■	E	W	E	L	L
V	O	L	T	■	O	N	E	S	■	L	E	Y	T	E

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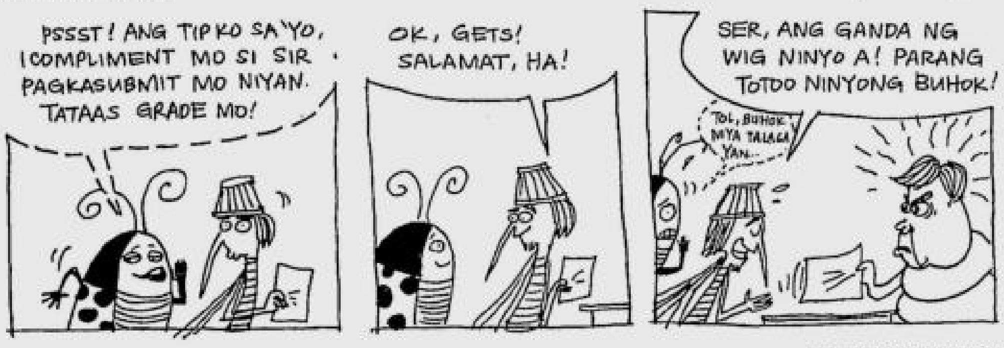
5/11/05

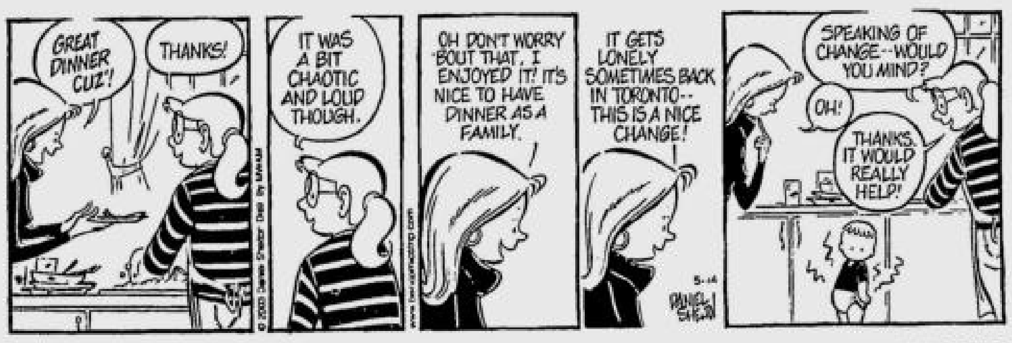
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PSSST! ANG TIP KO SA'YO, ICOMPLIMENT MO SI SIR PAGKASUBMIT MO NIYAN. TATAAS GRADE MO!
OK, GETS! SALAMAT, HA!
SER, ANG GANDA NG WIG NINYO A! PARANG TOTOO NINYONG BUHOK!
TOL, BUHOK NIYA TALAGA YAN...

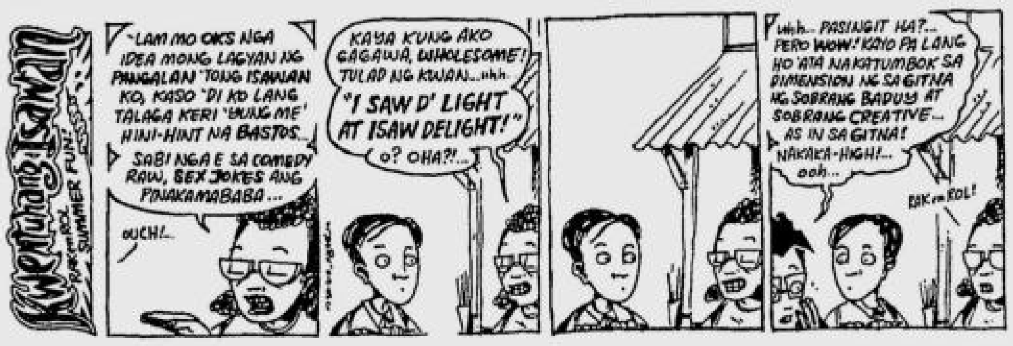
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GREAT DINNER CUZ!
THANKS!
IT WAS A BIT CHAOTIC AND LOUD THOUGH.
OH DON'T WORRY 'BOUT THAT. I ENJOYED IT! IT'S NICE TO HAVE DINNER AS A FAMILY.
IT GETS LONELY SOMETIMES BACK IN TORONTO-- THIS IS A NICE CHANGE!
SPEAKING OF CHANGE--WOULD YOU MIND?
OH!
THANKS. IT WOULD REALLY HELP!
5-14
DANIEL SHELTON

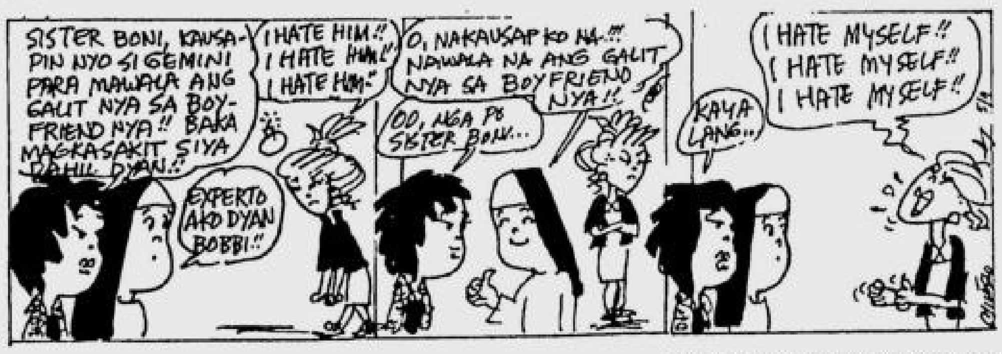
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KWENTUHANG ISAWAN
SUMMER FUN!
~LAM MO OKS NGA IDEA MONG LAGYAN NG PANGALAN 'TONG ISAWAN KO, KASO 'DI KO LANG TALAGA KERI 'BUNG ME' HINI-HINT NA BASTOS...
SABI NGA E SA COMEDY RAW, SEX JOKES ANG PINAKAMABABA...
OUCH!..
KAYA KUNG AKO GAGAWA, WHOLESOME! TULAD NG KWAN...uhh..
"I SAW D' LIGHT AT ISAW DELIGHT!"
O? OHA?!..
uhh... PASINGIT HA?... PERO WOW! KAYO PA LANG HO 'ATA NAKATUMBOK SA DIMENSION NG SA GITNA NG SOBRANG BADUY AT SOBRANG CREATIVE... AS IN SA GITNA! NAKAKA-HIGH!... ooh...
BIK-m-KOL!

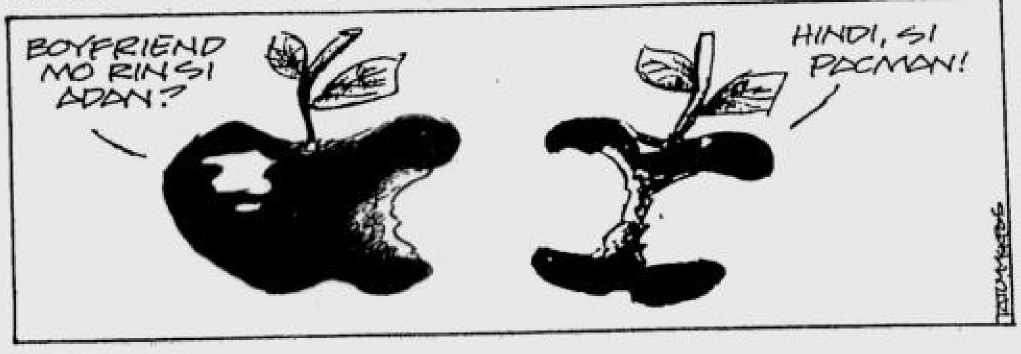
LOVEKNOTS

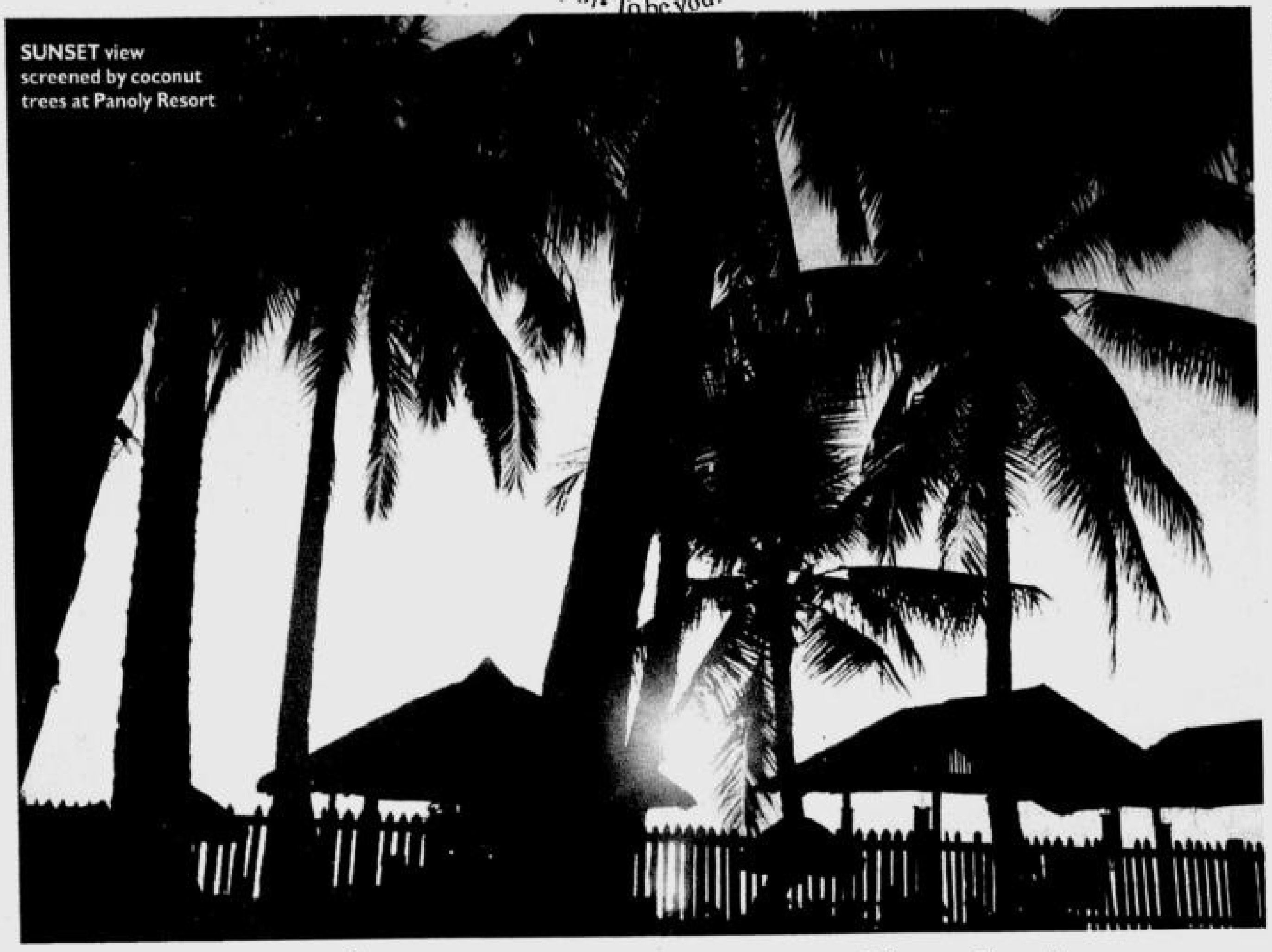
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SISTER BONI, KAUSAPIN NYO SI GEMINI PARA MAWALA ANG GALIT NYA SA BOYFRIEND NYA!! BAKA MAGKASAKIT SIYA DAHIL DYAN!!
I HATE HIM!! I HATE HIM!! I HATE HIM!!
EXPERTO AKO DYAN BOBBI!!
O, NAKAUSAP KO NA!!! NAWALA NA ANG GALIT NYA SA BOYFRIEND NYA!!
OO, NGA PO SISTER BONI...
KAYA LANG...
I HATE MYSELF!! I HATE MYSELF!! I HATE MYSELF!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BOYFRIEND MO RIN SI ADAN?
HINDI, SI PACMAN!



SUNSET view screened by coconut trees at Panoly Resort

SCENES from Boracay

The god of small things

The Wow Philippines Traveler's Card is slowly making itself a travel essential

EMCEES Ria and Cris take center stage at the Wow Philippines Card launching.

VIVID hues dominate Jonah's ceiling

Text and photos by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

LOCAL travel has never looked this good—due to a resurgence of interest in Philippine destinations not seen since the early '90s (during the whole Islands Philippines hullabaloo), more options have been popping up for travelers eager to tour the country. And with the multitude of travel posters around the city, who wouldn't be tempted to visit the country's hot spots?

Still, it's sad that local travel is often more expensive than a trip to neighboring Asian countries. While the Philippines has more attractions than some of those countries, many people still opt to travel abroad because the cost of going to Hong Kong or Bangkok is around the same price as going to Palawan or Bohol. (Going someplace in the same country doesn't get your passport stamped—but that's an entirely different story.)

Well, here's good news for wanderlust-infected people on a budget. Last month, Globe Handyphone, along with the Department of Tourism and Essential Elements Productions, launched the Wow Philippines Traveler's Privilege Card. The card, which is free with the Globe Travel SIM card, gives the bearer sizeable discounts and privileges in hundreds of establishments in 22 destinations all over the Philippines, such as Boracay, Bohol, Baguio, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Davao, Palawan and Metro Manila.

PARA-SAILING is a favorite sport

We were invited to try out the travel card during the launch in Boracay, a favorite vacation destination, where many partner establishments such as resorts and bars are located. Expecting the sometimes negligible 5-10 percent discount that many similar cards offer (just to be able to say they offer the promo), I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the discounts went up to 50 percent in some establishments. For something as tiny as the travel card (it's smaller than the average credit card, and comes with a chain you can conveniently wear around your neck), it offers considerable privileges.

Aside from cut rates on accommodations, there are discounts on food, shopping, recreation and transportation.

During the weekend, we were made to wander on our own around the island so we could try the card at our leisure. The card discounts included water sports, *pasalubong* stores, resorts (including Jony's, Pearl of the Pacific and The Panoly) and restaurants.

We spent the weekend doing all the mandatory Boracay activities—sitting on the cool sand, getting a massage, sipping shakes at Jonah's, tanning, swimming and the occasional water sports. It was my guilty pleasure to watch people get tossed off the banana boats.

In between wandering about, the organizers prepared a couple of games for the participants of the media hop—the first one was a quiz about the different local destinations ("One hundred points for Philippine festivals!") and the second one, a scavenger hunt that promised pricey sunglasses to the winning group. The group that I joined won both, winning the scavenger hunt in five minutes flat. Afterwards, we celebrated our designer shades by partying the night away (with the discount card, of course.)

However, since I spent the entire weekend sitting on the shore instead of bar-hopping, I found more use for the card when I got back to Manila—it's handy in restaurants and museums. But after that, I found myself planning trips with my friends around it.

A typical conversation would go something like this:

"Hey, let's go to Bohol."

"Sure! Where are we staying?"

"I was thinking of the ____ beach resort."

"Wait, let me check... No! I don't have a discount in that place. What else is there?"

"Well, the rest of us don't have that card, you know..."

"Get your own card, buster. It's free."

And so on and so forth. Funny how such a tiny plastic card can change my travel plans completely. But as with many small things, it matters. A lot.

Check www.esssentialelementsprod/travelerscard.html for details

E-mail biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

Faces of Asia in new documentaries

From page F1

filmmakers are pushed to the limit to produce documentaries of hallmark standards of National Geographic Channel, put on the world stage for global viewing."

Karina Holden, director and producer of "Beetle Battles: Kwang Bang" from ShowReal Asia season one, returns with two documentaries: "Hiss of Death" and "Samurai Spiders." She says she is attracted to do engaging stories that haven't been told before, such as the stories she did on the snake fighters of Thailand and spider matches enthusiasts in Japan.

For author and journalist Sohaila Kapur, the subjects of her story weren't as open and approachable. In "Indian Witch Hunt," awarded as this season's Best Film at the ShowReal Asia awards, Sohaila investigates a brutal case of witch-hunting in Jharkhand, one of the many in the region.

In villages making up the tribal belt of India, women suspected of witchcraft are hunted down and attacked, with some forced to eat human excreta, others stripped naked, tortured and killed.

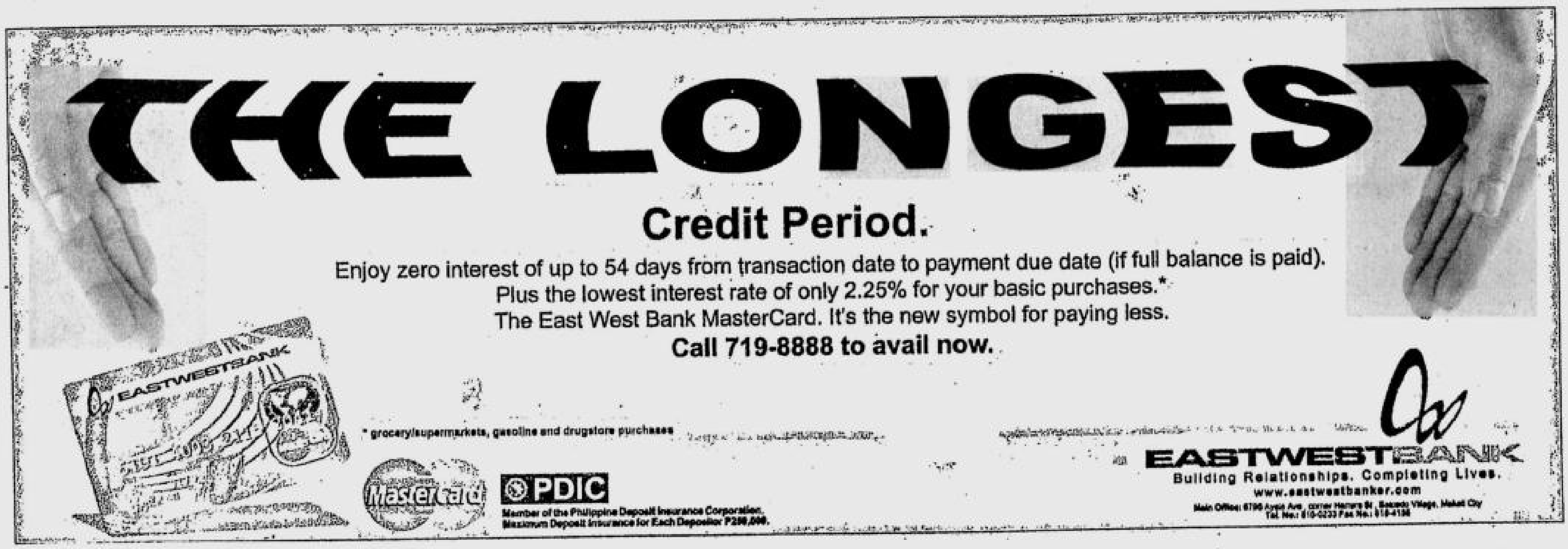
This disturbing trend of witch-hunting has driven women to seclusion and isolation, preferring to be alone than face the death sentences of witch believers. And ironically, the same women swear allegiance to witchcraft, practicing dark rituals to fight off the mob. "It is women who are always ostracized," Sohaila explains. "It is interesting that most gurus—those who teach witchcraft—are men; and yet, it is only women who are discriminated against."

In the industrialized country of Japan, a town is hunting down an entirely different breed: spiders. In the Philippines, where a childhood game of spider fighting is as easily arranged as having two arachnids on a stick, the people of Kaijiki in Southern Japan has a whole festival for it.

The annual Kumo Gassen, which translates to "war of spiders," sees hundreds of matches and about 24,000 observers and participants. Though spiders here do not fight to their death, the competition taps into a natural instinct—to fight for territory.

Other documentaries scheduled to be shown include a look on the world's busiest port found in Singapore (Megastructures-World's Busiest Port), a look into the Japan's unique festivals (The Tokyo Shock Boys' Guide to Japan), the film stunt industry in India (Stuntmen of Bollywood), antique forgery business in China (Faking China) and a forensic pathologist's fight in Thailand (Crime Scene Bangkok).

The first episode, "Hiss of Death," will have a repeat at 3 p.m. today. A new documentary premieres every Wednesday at 10 p.m. For schedules, visit www.ngcasia.com/sony/showrealasia.



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BUDDING Artists

ART appreciation at Greenbelt 3's Fountain Area

A day with an artist

By Christian B. Bautista
2bU! Correspondent

FOR ANY novice trying to learn the fundamentals of art, watching a master at work could be quite a moving experience. Watching a skilled artist in action provides an upstart more enlightenment than volumes upon volumes of theory and art. Every masterful stroke becomes a lofty standard to be duplicated.

Budding artists of all ages saw what to aim with A Day with an Artist, an art event held recently at the Greenbelt Fountain Area. The workshop featured renowned still-life painter Fernando Sena, founder of the Kabataan Tondo Art Group.

Drenched in the hot summer sun, people in attendance, most of whom were children picking up charcoal pencil for the first time, ignored the heat to learn the secrets of the trade from the popular art teacher. "This is to promote art consciousness. We are harnessing the talents of the youth," Sena said.

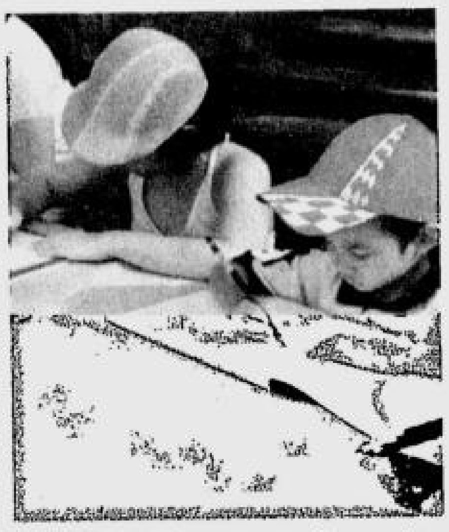
The workshop, which concentrated on the basics, taught students fundamental sketching techniques, the backbone of more advanced forms of the craft. Subjects were vases and fruits, the staple of still-life painting. Sena explained that by studying still life, artists could easily transition into more difficult styles like portraits.

Despite his complaint about students who skip to more advanced forms like oil and watercolor without first learning how to sketch, Sena admitted that his workshop hastens the learning curve of his students. "This workshop is a short cut. In college, pencil drawing takes two semesters," he added.

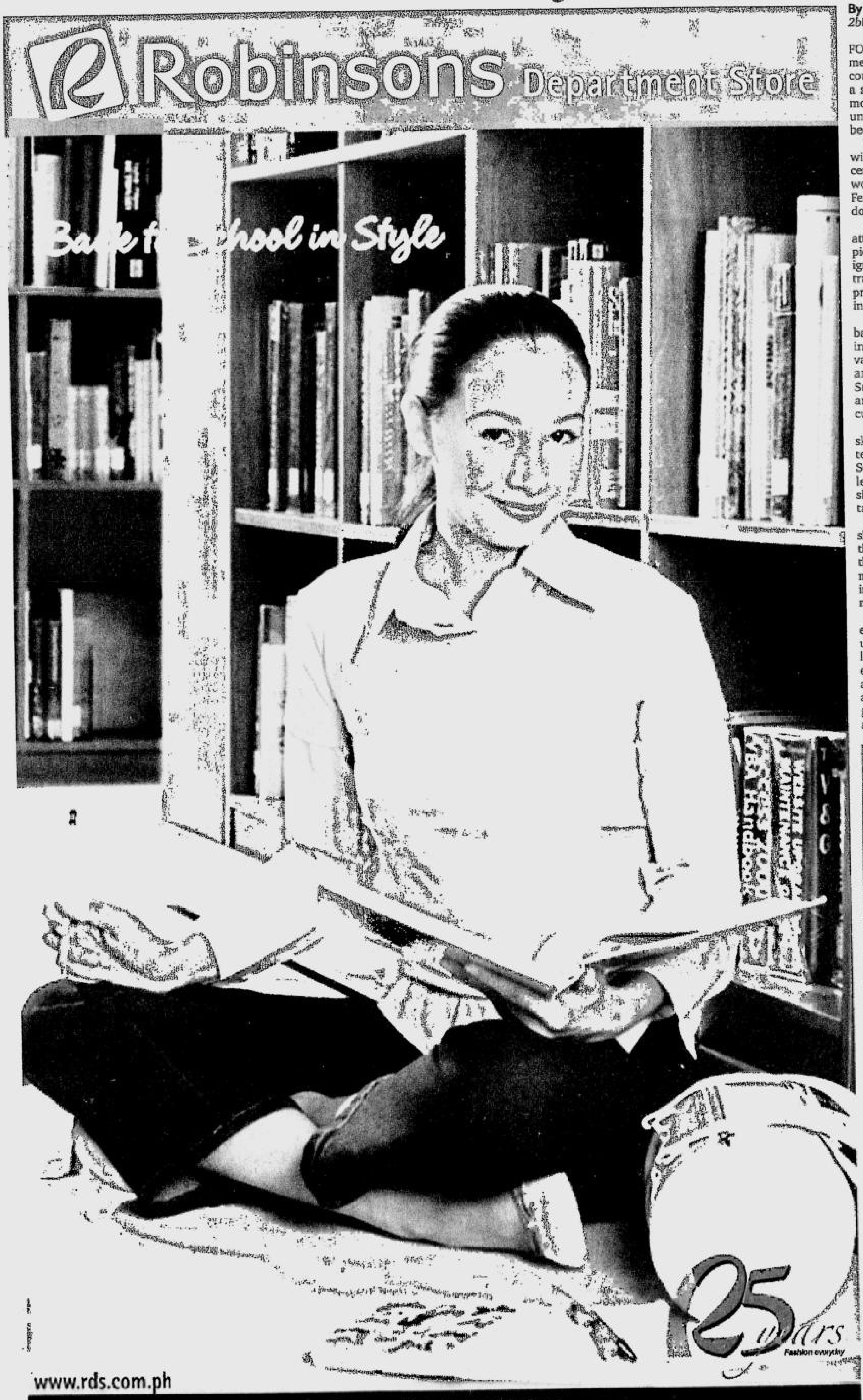
In fact, the people who attended the workshop showed significant improvement within the three-hour event. "When I first asked them to draw for the first time, I detected that most of them did not have the proper training. But after the lecture, *meron nang* technique *yung mga gawa nila*," Sena explained.

The lecture was the second in a series of events by Ayala Land Inc. and the Ayala Museum. A week earlier, prominent portrait and landscape artist Romulo Galicano had imparted some of his knowledge of color and tone in a similar workshop. A Day with an Artist was also sponsored by Lefranc & Bourgeois, Figaro Coffee, Color & Co., Winsor & Newton and Canson Artist Papers.

RENOWNED artist Fernando Sena spends the day withaspiring artists



ART ATTACK. It's never too early to tap into your inner artist



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